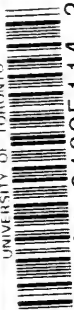


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SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

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07-10-27

SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

Six Lectures.

By JAMES HANNAY,

AUTHOR OF "SINGLETON FONTENOY," ETC.

"Ego autem (existimes licet, quod lubet) mirifice capior facetiis,
maxime nostratibus."

CICERO, *Epist. ad Div. lib. ix. 15.*

"Non ulla Musis pagina gratior,
Quam quæ severis ludicra jungere
Novit, fatigatamque nugis
Utilibus recreare mentem."

DR. JOHNSON, *Ad Urianum.*

LONDON:

DAVID BOGUE, FLEET STREET.

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Prefatory Dedication.

TO WILTSHIRE STANTON AUSTIN, ESQ.

MY DEAR AUSTIN,

IN preparing for the press these Lectures (first delivered a twelvemonth ago), no part of my task has been more agreeable than that which is now to be discharged,—the dedication of them to yourself. This slight compliment I offer to you, in acknowledgment of your qualities as a friend and a companion, to which I owe many pleasant hours spent in your society. To dwell upon the talents, the taste, and the literature, which you unite with these qualities, would be to do what your friends would find superfluous, and you yourself disagreeable. In justice to my judgment, I must, however, say, that I dedicate my book to one, whose capacity for criticising it, is only equalled by the natural kindness which will make him criticise it charitably.

I take the opportunity of making what remarks I think it necessary to address to good-natured readers of this performance, by way of preface.

To treat of all Satire and all Satirists is a task which I never dreamed of performing within these limits; and my work is rather a collection of passages in the history of Satirical Literature, than any thing else. To those who have written the Satire Proper, my main attention has been given; and of the Satiric Drama and Satiric Fiction no adequate

treatment has been attempted. Yet something of what is here offered, illustrative of the Satirists with whom I deal, will be found applicable to those whom I omit; while, if I ventured on another book on the subject, such would by no means supersede or interfere with the present one. Bad or good, it is complete in itself: the crab has its own rotundity, as well as the golden pippin!

There are two facts of the highest interest about satirical literature: 1st, that the Satires of every age have been important agents in the historic work done in it;—2d, that Satires, as literary objects, give us valuable aid in studying the life of the age in which they were produced. I think that general readers somewhat neglect the Satirists; and one of my objects has been, I confess, in the language of Cicero, “*ut laudem eorum jam prope senescentem, quantum ego possem, ab oblivione hominum atque a silentio vindicarem.*” (De Orat. ii. 2.) To this end, I have aimed at a popular and picturesque delineation of them and their works. I have especially wished to show, too, that the great Satirists have been good and lovable men:—for I never made the too common mistake of supposing Satire to be like a certain poison known to the ancients, which best retained its properties when carried in an ass’s hoof!

In the leading principles of the book, my dear Austin, I am aware that you agree with me, however you may dissent in less important particulars; and I end, as I began, by testifying with how much pleasure I am,

Yours very sincerely,

JAMES HANNAY.

June 1854.

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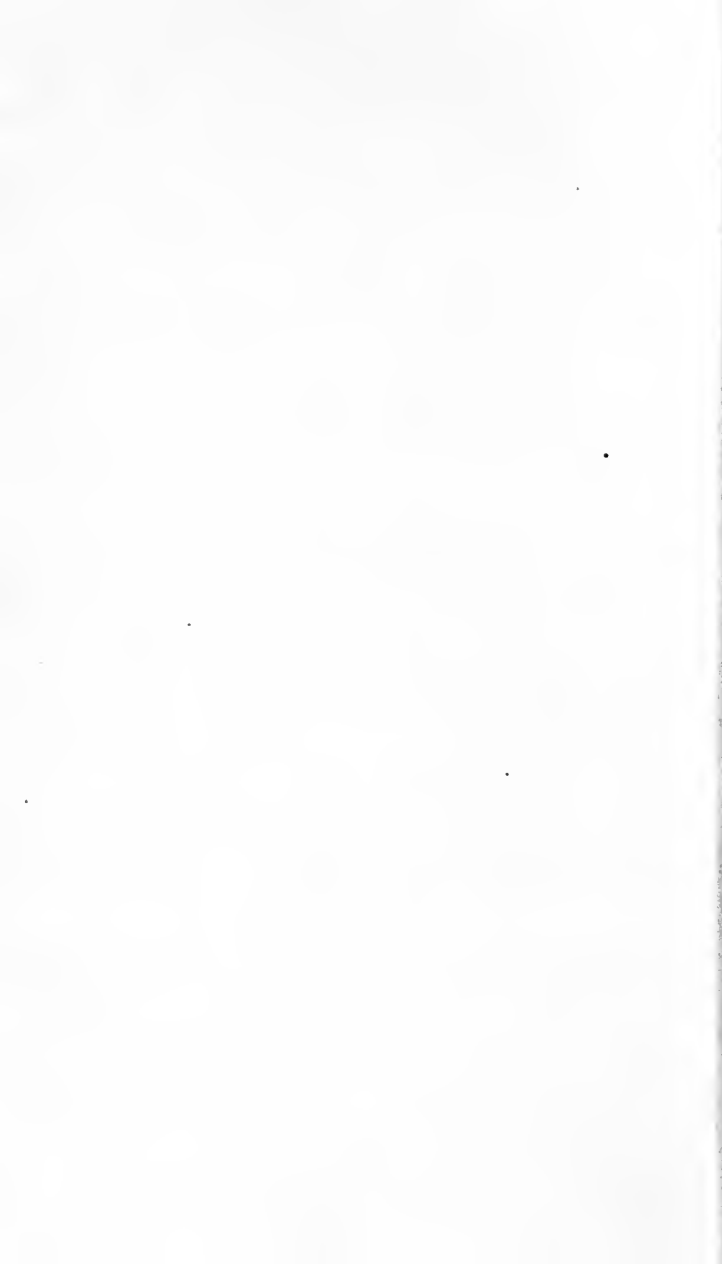
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HORACE AND JUVENAL.



SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

LECTURE I.

HORACE AND JUVENAL.

THE celebrated men whom I presume to make the subject of these discourses lived in very different ages of the world, and in various spheres of life; but they have all a kind of brotherly likeness; and this belongs to their work as well as to their characters. Born with rare powers and peculiar tendencies, they have co-operated in producing what we call the satirical element in literature. A distinct phase of itself in literary story—a production taking its own place by the side of Poetry, Comedy, and Tragedy—such is Satire. Perhaps there is no kind of literary work wherein heart and hand go so closely together; and which, therefore, is so likely, in the most artificial ages, to possess spontaneity and freshness. The men who have done the work are of all literary ranks,—from the king, who chastises with a sceptre,

to the common hangman, whose whip is not without benefit on occasion. How many natural agencies does this multiform power resemble! The flashing lightning, terrifying the evil-doer, while purifying the air—such is Satire, when great and earnest. The white nettle-flower,—the sharp, prickly, torturing broom, all blazing with colour—these typify light and brilliant Satire. War-rockets, too, furnish a tolerable object of comparison; while many an epigrammatist, lively but harmless, scintillates only too often in sparks as evanescent as those struck out on the highways by the hoofs of an animal which has long supplied a favourite illustration to the satirical writer.

If I undertook to treat of Satire in all its forms, my task would be endless. Its spirit is as subtle as that of Nature itself. It runs underground in one country as a river, and comes up in another as a fountain. It is like one of those mysterious personages in the Arabian Tales, who is to-day a brilliant gifted prince, but to-morrow an ape, struggling to express itself decently.

Now, to make a practical use of this last comparison, let me assure you, that it is to the prince, and not to the ape, that I mean to direct my main attention. I shall not go at any great length into the subject of those Satires which have no connexion with beautiful and noble objects; I never bestow

willingly labour but on that which I admire. I shall deal with great men, who would never have known *scorn* if they had not known *love*; whose natures foamed into excitement at contact with the base, as the old Venetian glass cracked when the poison was poured into it. For I have no faith in the theory, that there is any necessary blackness or morbidity of disposition in the satirist. People who really dread the daring, original, impulsive character which is the foundation of the satirical, ingeniously blame the satirist for the state of things which he attacks. Juvenal was debauched, because he lashed the debauched; Burns was impious, and so attacked the elders. Fancy an artist's putting up his daguerreotype apparatus in Smithfield in the presence of a set of aldermen, and then people's blaming the Sun, because it did not show a paradise, with a company of wise men!

But I must lay down a further limitation. I shall not include all who have written excellently well in the satirical way, when a particular occasion demanded it. *That* course, again, would multiply our meetings indefinitely. We should have to take in Milton, for the sake of his controversial pamphlets, along with Pope. We should have to bring in Bishop Warburton, as a companion to Churchill. The business would be endless. No. I shall deal mainly with men who were satirists born; whose

main object, main distinction, was satire; whose chief influence on the world was exercised by it. Acting on that determination, I hope to introduce to you some great men, some good men, some important eras of the world; and generally, I hope, some healthy and natural pictures of human life.

What we call Satire—that form of composition adopted by Boileau, by Dryden, Pope, and Churchill—derives its name from the Latin, and traces its pedigree up through Horace, and his predecessor Lucilius, to the early days of Italy. It has Roman blood in its veins; and we have a right to expect pluck from it. But I warn you fairly, we tread on dangerous ground here. We tread on the bones of old literary battle-fields, where, however, I hope corn is now to be gathered; for there used to be a great fight about this point of the origin of Satire. Many a time it has set commentators by the ears; and the ears of commentators are too often formidable affairs! One party held that the Roman Satire was of Greek descent, taking its name from our mythological friend the Satyr—to whom I, for one, would not like to trace my literary line. The other party said “No.” They planted themselves on an express declaration of Quintilian’s; on certain expressions of Horace himself; and on many other arguments, deciding that Satire was of Roman birth, and derived its name from the Latin adjective *satur*,

satura. This last view very luckily pleased the judgment of the great Isaac Casaubon¹ of Geneva, one of the sturdy, all-embracing scholars of the old days. The English have a special interest in him; for he lies in Westminster Abbey, where he was laid in 1614. Four years before, he had come over here, when James I., who did love letters (let them say what else of him they please), received him well; nay, even did what has always been, and still is, the favourite way in England of rewarding high merit,—for he asked him to dinner!²

¹ Born Feb. 18, 1559; died July 1, 1614. The publication of Casaubon's "Diary" (*I. Casauboni Ephemerides*, ed. J. Russell, Oxonii, 1849) must be considered one of the most interesting events in recent literary history. It gives an admirable idea of the life of those ancient scholars; and testifies to the learning, the piety, the industry, and the affectionate nature of its great author. He came to London (in company with Wotton) in October 1610; was presented to the king very soon afterwards; and spent the remainder of his life here. The diary commences Feb. 18, 1597, on Casaubon's thirty-eighth birthday; and lasts (with the exception of a blank, where a part is lost, from January 1604 to July 1607) till sixteen days before his death. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who knew him well, has this paragraph about him: "I was received to the house" (at Paris) "of that incomparable scholar Isaac Casaubon, by whose learned conversation I much benefited myself." *Life of Lord Herbert*.

² James treated Casaubon handsomely;—he drew him more from his books, to be sure, than that industrious scholar liked—to hold forth to him about Tacitus, Plutarch, and theology. But he made him presents; bestowed on him a prebend in Westminster and in Canterbury, and a pension. In August 1612, the king wrote

Any one who feels curious to meddle with this old controversy will find a very charming narrative of it in Dryden's Preface to his *Juvenal*.¹ Casaubon's Treatise² (which is a luminous and weighty composition) has done its work well; for I believe I may venture to say, that his theory has found general acceptance,³ and may lay claim to being considered the orthodox one. He shows, that the two kinds of Satire, the Greek and the Roman, were essentially different; that the derivation is not accordant with etymology, nor supported by old grammarians; that the Romans had their Satire long before the Greek influence began; and so forth. And he finds the germ of this famous sort of composition in certain old Italian practices, of which our Horace has given us a sketch,—the railleries of the jolly fellows

thus to Sir Julius Cæsar. "Chancellor of my Exchequer, I will have Mr. Casaubon paid before me, my wife, and my barnes." (*Ephemerides*, p. 942.) "Deus ipsum servet! Amen," adds Casaubon.

¹ Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xiii. pp. 37 to 65.

² *De Sat. Poes. &c.*, Paris, 1605; the same year that his *Persius* appeared; of which his friend Joseph Scaliger used to say, that "the sauce was worth more than the fish."

³ E. Spanheim, whose essay on this subject (preface to his *Cæsars de l'Empereur Julien*, Paris, 1683) is commended by Gibbon, calls Casaubon "le savant homme qui a le premier débrouillé cette matière." For more modern confirmations of his view, see Ruperti de *Satira Romanorum*, in his *Juvenal*; Corssen's *Origines Poesis Romanæ* (especially pp. 147 et seq.); Dillenburger's *Horace*; and art. *Satura* in Smith's *Dict. Ant.*

at the grand old agricultural festivals of remote times.

Now it is not within my present plan to go at any length into a controversy like this. But here is the interest of the matter. *We* derive our satirical forms from Horace and Juvenal. In all other literary productions the Romans are imitators of the Greeks; but here a certain originality is claimed for them. Here are good reasons for thinking that you have a draught of wine given you with a flavour of the old Italian grape in it. "Greece has modified this"—the Roman arguer might say, "but we had a Satire of our own before the day of her influence. We derive this from days of old, and from the wild, humorous heart of our countrymen at their harvest-homes. *Satira* does not come from your shaggy-legged, small-horned, ape-faced Satyrs; it comes from our own *satura*, originally applied adjectively to a vessel full of the first-fruits; and so, by transition, to any mixture; and so, to a mixed intellectual composition, like those in dispute." Well, to me it is beautiful to see how a people sticks to its traditions, and loves its past! I like to think of those early days, when they crowded together, from far and wide, to celebrate their harvest and their vintage; and to recognise solemnly the genius, the supernatural and mystic power, which underlaid the beauty of the country, and the bursting fertility

which loaded the team! Silvanus had his milk; the Genius had his wine and flowers; the banquet followed, and the rude dance; and then came the jest and the raillery, in doggerel and in speech. How astonished would some *agricola*, noted for a pungent way of treating his neighbours on these occasions, have been, had some superior and prophetic spirit, some supernatural reviewer, touched his shoulder, and said, "Sir, you are a powerful satirist; you unite startling invective with wild humour; your irony is rather coarse; and you should not attack such a respectable man as yonder So-and-so; but on the whole"—Yes, he would have stared; but he was an ancestor of the satirist who supped with Scipio Africanus, and of the divine little man of the world who lived in the Sabine farm; and so of hundreds of other votaries of the *satura*, of whom he little dreamed.

At all events, it appears to me that the Roman humorous character has never been done justice to. We do not rightly feel the *humanity* of the old Romans, when we think of them only as grim soldierly people, with a peculiar conformation of nose! A stern, iron race they were, to be sure, in their great day, realising this condition,—thorough, clear, practical action, within a circle rigidly bounded by religious awe. A Roman was the most practical of men,—a soldier, lawgiver, road-maker;—all within

a ring of sacred mystery. I dare say, accordingly, that if one were suddenly transplanted into Rome, such as it was while it retained its character, one would notice, in the expression of the faces in the streets, a distinct something corresponding to our severe ideas.

But now, to my mind, the Roman humour was correspondent in depth with the national character, something on the same scale with its sense of patriotism, and its notions of discipline. I fancy it clumsy, perhaps, but grandly genial, and such as laughter should be, to shake the sides of men who shook the world! Consider the Saturnalia, for instance, and compare them with our Greenwich and the "fun of the fair!"—A huge city and its institutions turned upside down; slaves jeering their masters, in a style to astonish Uncle Tom; blazing revelry, and feasting and drinking, that would kill our aldermen; fun, in fact, proportionate to the seriousness of other times, as nature arranges these matters. Or, consider such a scene as this: Julius Cæsar, in his triumph, rolling along the streets to the Capitol, and the common soldiers following behind, and shouting out satirical doggerel against him!¹ What "unbendings" were

¹ Suetonius (*Jul. Cæs. c. 49*) has preserved a specimen of these compositions. "In the Gallic triumph also," he says, "the soldiers, among the other songs, such as they sing when following the car"—and gives three singular verses. See Corssen, *Orig. Poesis Rom.* p. 135.

these! what characteristics of what I shall venture to call the *jolly element* in the Roman people!—a product of the native genius of Italy, like the Fescennine verses, or Atellan plays.

It is unfortunate that we are without any adequate literary expression of this element. So fortune would have it. The old ballad literature of Rome perished entirely. But for my part, I fancy that we get here and there, in several writers, a gleam of the old Roman humour, the essence of which, I take it, was a manly heartiness, and which was as likely to be somewhat coarse and homely as not. In the pages of Cicero (who was one of the most genial of men, and whose writings overflow with wit and good-nature) we find some remarkable allusions to this quality. In a letter to an accomplished Roman friend,¹ whose humour he praises, he speaks of his jests “as salter than Attic ones,—old Roman and urban ones.” He goes on to lament over the extinction of their native facetiæ, now become forgotten in Latium and the city; and in his complimentary way adds, “When I see you, I seem to see the Granii and Lucilii again. I protest that we

¹ *Epist. ad Diversos*, ix. 15, written to Pætus, A. U. C. 708.—“Hilaritas” and “suavitas” were two notable elements in the disposition, personal and literary, of this great man. Stern gentlemen, who think they could have managed the period better than he did, abuse him; men familiar with his writings love his memory.

have scarcely any body but you left, in whom I can recognise the image of our 'antique and vernacular gaiety.'" This is very striking. Horace, in spite of his Greek culture, and the influence of the Old Comedy, must have been indebted to this traditional quality. In Juvenal, who had a more impulsive and strongly-marked personality in satire than Horace, it is more clearly to be seen.

Of the professed Roman satirists before Horace's time we have only fragments; and why should I ask you to a banquet of crumbs? The Roman world was just culminating towards the perfection of its imitative culture, when Quintus Horatius Flaccus was born, in Venusia, in Apulia, the country now called the Basilicata, sixty-five years before the birth of Christ. His father had been born a slave, but manumitted before his son's birth, so that the poet was *ingenuus*, as they called it. However, he never got quite rid of the taint of his origin,—any more than he would if he had been born, under corresponding disadvantages, in our own highly civilised country. Throughout life his enemies touched him up occasionally with the ancestral whip. It must have been a luxury to a dunce, whose great-grandfather had been a consul, to cool his wrath by reflecting that the poet who was admired by Augustus was the son of a freedman.

The freedman, the father of Horace, was a very

worthy man, and made it the object of his life to develop his son's faculties. He helped, too, by a practice which might have been dangerous in an ordinary case, to awaken the satirical element in the youngster; for he was wont to impress moral lessons on him by using the neighbours as "frightful examples." About his twelfth year he took the boy to Rome, to give him every advantage of instruction; and from Rome the youth went to Athens, to finish his education. Every thing was done by that people on the great scale. You went off to Athens, or Rhodes, or Asia, to get what learning you required; and you attained the rudiments of the military art at the expense of distant barbarians. Horace was a fortunate boy. He ripened into maturity under the sky of Greece; in a city which, though conquered, had yet a sacredness in the eyes of all intellectual Romans,¹ and where the traditions of philosophy and beauty were still fresh and green. Here he modelled himself on the Greek civilisation; here he wandered under olive-trees or plane-trees, and by the banks of famous rivers, and heard talk enough about the Good and the Beautiful to give him matter for speculation all his life. He had a quick sense of all fine things in the moral and physical world; but admired the lofty

¹ See the fine passage of Cicero's speech *Pro L. Flacco*, c. 26: "Adsunt Athenienses," &c.

and the beautiful as objects, rather than felt disposed to adopt them as subjects to be worked out in active existence. Many a fine flash in his lyrics shows how he had felt the beauty of the nobler theories of life which he had heard. What we know of his actual career, and the general drift of his writing, however, does not come up to that mark. As a humorist, he could not but see the absurdity of the pedants of stoicism, who placed every thing in garb and rudeness; as a moralist, he was more remarkable for good common sense than ethical earnestness; as a writer, he loved gracefulness, elegance, a kind of sublime point, more than inner beauty or sacredness; as a man, he was worldly, prudent, self-conscious, a little too fond of high friends, good dinners, and disposed to subordinate art to life. In a word, he was one of a class known in every age, and many of whom make excellent satirists; men, of whom it may be said, that they take a deeper interest in society than in mankind.

It was while Horace was maturing into this kind of man at Athens, being twenty-one years of age, that there came, what the old English pamphlets would call, "bloody news!" The Roman mob were breaking into riots; Cicero (now sixty-three years old) was haranguing in the Senate; and messengers (*tabellarii*) were scampering over the wide

world to tell every body that the great Julius Cæsar had been murdered.

The high-flown liberal party had, as the vulgar phrase goes, done it at last. The foremost Roman man, and the flower of all the aristocrats that have ever appeared in the world, had been crushed out of life. Whatever gifts of intellect he had, the world would never get the benefit of them any more. He was handed over to history and to republican eloquence for ever. Well, that death brought many a death in its train. Cicero was murdered next year; Brutus and Cassius killed themselves the year after; Mark Antony crossed the black river with the languid wave (as Horace calls it,) in a few years more; and all the great men being swept off, Cæsar, the nephew, mounted the throne as emperor, and order reigned in Rome. There's republican eloquence for you, and its charming results! Now, you know, began the Augustan age; for who else produced Horace, and Virgil, and Varius, and Tibullus, and taught them to be geniuses, and to write fine Latin, except the emperor? Some men are lucky in history and in life. But so the world wags. In our own country, after the wars of the Roses had swept away the daring and generous souls, and the great Plantagenets were quiet in their graves, up to the throne came that prudent, sagacious Henry VII., and was a pros-

perous king, and died in his bed, leaving an immense fortune.

Horace joined Brutus when he came to Athens, and served as tribune of a legion at Philippi. He has left no details of the battle; and nothing is known of his proceedings there with certainty, except that he ran away. He seems to have treated the affair in a jocular manner afterwards, pleasantly quizzing himself, like a man of the world, who knew that he could do better things than fight, and that the emperor would think no worse of him for having run away in the cause of Brutus. He came to Rome unharmed; and here occurs a period of obscurity, when he was in considerable poverty. His genius, however, showed itself; and people who interested themselves in literary matters discovered that there was a highly-rising man going about (son of a freedman, they believed), who displayed a right sharp vein in the satiric way, and had an eye for a dunce or a humbug; who wrote a lyric which, for finish and touch, would have done honour to the old Greeks; in fact, a man in all respects worthy to approach (with all modesty, of course) the great Mæcenæ. Horace thought so too, no doubt, and with immense respect and modesty approached the great Mæcenæ.

At first he was not particularly intimate; but presently he was admitted among his most select

and dearest friends, and had the famous Farm bestowed upon him. This is one of the truest friendships on record between patron and man of letters. The sumptuous Mæcenas, whose taste in jewelry, and love of it, were the wonder of his contemporaries, who liked all kinds of elegant things (including literature), probably classed the poet at least as high as he did his unrivalled collection of bijouterie, and was as warmly fond and familiar as a man who comes from Etruscan kings can reasonably be with a mere man of genius of the middle class. Horace, on the other hand, must have been sincerely grateful to one who gave him honour, leisure, the capability of a sufficiency of Greek manuscripts, and, generally speaking, enough for a philosopher of taste, who is not servilely dependent on fortune, and who "despises the malignant vulgar,"—particularly that section of the vulgar who are jealous of one's entry to the palace, and to Mæcenas's great villas, and who insinuate that one is a tuft-hunter! Such was the relation between them, which I believe to have been an affectionate and good one of its kind. I dare say that Horace did not think quite so much of Mæcenas's writings, in his heart, as Mæcenas himself; but then, one can't expect a man to come from Etruscan kings, and be a genius too! I dare say further, that one who was so sincere in the cause of good sense, and in love of the fit and

the elegant, must have been apt to spy something that looked very like innocent and illustrious blood on the toga of the emperor, with all his managing talent, and his admiration of clever men, whose applause is such a good thing for an emperor to have. But though the satirist knew very well that → “whatever madness the kings are at, the Greeks must pay the piper,” he knew this in theory only. Besides, what matter?—one can fancy him saying, “While fools shun one error, they run into the contrary extreme. Any tranquillity is preferable to idiots, like yon Stoic, with his beard and his cloak, who goes about chattering that a self-possessed cobbler of sound moral views is a king.” Horace was a very sensible man, in our English use of that phrase; and I believe that he was sincere in his expressed views about patron and emperor, and that he preserved his self-respect in his relation to them both.

→ I esteem Horace as a moralist and satirist (and the Roman satire is essentially ethical; and indeed all great satirists are moralists) more than as a poet. It would be more accurate to describe him as a → satirist who wrote poetry, than as a poet who wrote satires. A late biographer (Milman) deals again with that fatal old question (so often raised also about Pope), was he a poet at all? The very doubt is dangerous to him; and unhappily these doubts

just rise when poetry itself is taking a fresh development. Who shall deny the charm of his *carmina*—the finish of his art? They must be read again and again with pleasure. But it seems to me that the key to the whole question was furnished by Buttmann, when he said, “Horace is not one of those poets who wrote from an impulse of Nature.”¹ It is a certain condition of mind, original and creative, which makes a man a poet; and that that was possessed by Horace, I do not see reason to believe.

When one examines his poems, one sees at the first glance that the creation of many of them was merely artificial. He avails himself of a tradition—of a situation—of some little scene foreign to Rome in place and character; and this he works up in Italian marble, and gives out as a Latin poem. Thus, many of his lyrics are paintings of old subjects (Greek subjects on Roman frescoes); imitations of the old classic models of the Archipelago, and the east of the Mediterranean; and embodiments of a mythology in which he did not believe. Then, consider the difficulties to which all attempts to treat these poems historically give rise. What are we to make of the Greek names in the lyrics, for instance? The commentators have done their best; and have endowed the philosophic Horace with such a bevy of Greek acquaintances, particularly damsels,—lute-

¹ *Philological Museum*, vol. i. p. 439.

playing dancing-girls, with ivy-bound heads or rose-crowned heads, with hair of one form and hair of another,—that criticism pauses in despair. The acute scholar I quoted a moment ago takes these young Greek persons to task: he exposes Horace's contradictions in his statements about them; shows that one *Lalage* is quite different from another *Lalage*; condemns the notion of their historic existence; stigmatises those who maintain it as "gossiping anecdote-mongers;" and lays it down, that "non-reality is an essential feature of Horace's Odes." A misconception is thus removed about Horace's private life: but, further, one finds many literary difficulties removed likewise. I cannot fancy Horace believing, except in an artistic kind of way, in his mythological subjects. You leave him skill, tact, taste, language; you conceive him, too, under this theory, a much more natural and coherent being,—as a fine-tasted satirist, and man of the world, who did pictures after the Greeks,—than you do if you suppose him, as the author of the moral and satirical discourses, to have been directly inspired by old Pagan piety towards the gods; or, living in the plain way he did, to have been habitually enchanted by Greek girls and boys, while sitting under the myrtle or the vine. I esteem him, in his lyrical capacity, as an exquisite reproducer of old forms; while, of course, the value of his lyrics

is immeasurable in this light, as a picture of the ancient life, its beliefs, its sentiments, its gaiety.¹

Horace seems to have had very modest notions himself about his pretensions to poetry proper. In

¹ Buttmann's essay is well worth studying. Any one who attempts to understand Horace by assuming that historic reality against which he contends, will find himself in endless difficulties. Let us just glance at some of them:—1. There are about eighteen women celebrated by Horace in the language of love, of whom the majority bear names from the Greek. 2. Of some of these, contradictory statements are made. 3. The tone of the Satires and Epistles on this subject is different from that of the Songs.

A fatality attaches to all attempts to treat of the *puellæ* historically. For instance, Professor Newman in his very valuable *Horace* (p. 18) says that Neæra and Cinara are probably the same person. But it may be remarked on the other side—

1. That Cinara, whoever she was, died early (4, 13), having been quite an early flame of Horace's (Ep. 1, 7, 28); while he sends (*i. e.* poetically) for Neæra to come to him on the occasion of Augustus's return from Spain (3, 14) in A. U. C. 730, when he was turned of forty years old.

2. That he calls Cinara *rapacious*, as if that were one of her characteristics (Ep. 1, 14, 33), and does not apply it to Neæra at all.

3. That in the Epistles above quoted, Cinara's love is spoken of as an old story; which it would not have been, had the Neæra of A. U. C. 730 (represented as attractive and young when these Epistles were probably his daily occupation) been identical with her.

The truth is, that if many of Horace's songs are any thing but mere fancy-pictures and imitations, he was more dissolute than Verres or Mark Antony. It seems more reasonable, for many considerations, to believe many of his lyrics purely artificial and fanciful;—but at the same time there is a class of really historic ones—national and moral,—and these are ethical rather than poetic.

the Lyrics he speaks of himself with reference to the Greek masters; in the Satires he speaks, in the 4th of the First Book, specially on the question; and says truly, that not to men who, like himself, delivered what was similar to prosaic speech, was the poetic name to be given. To the diviner mind, and to the mouth sounding great things, belonged that name:—which remains as true at this hour as it was when he uttered it; and the controversy on the subject shows that the heart of mankind revolts against the indiscriminate application of the most sacred of literary titles.

When we come to speak, however, of his Satires, our laudation is more unqualified. I should be sorry to think that I underrated such a man in any way. What, then, let us first ask, is his moral point of view? He will always live as a teacher of the world: what was the central moral impulse that prompted him to teach?

It happens, fortunately enough, that in these two Romans we have the two great types of satirists ready to our hands. If you choose to dispense with a mere pedantic nicety, you can classify all the great satirical writers with one or the other. For instance, Erasmus was a Horatian man, Buchanan more like Juvenal; Pope sympathised most with Horace, Dryden with Juvenal. Horace was cosmopolitan rather than patriotic, Juvenal strongly

Roman: Erasmus was a European man of letters, Buchanan a good deal of a Scotchman; and so on. You can trace the peculiarities of each class, down to the lowest types. The smallest form that the Horatian satirist has yet been known in, is that of a worldly cockney jester; while the Juvenalian has been found in the same stratum, as a ruffian uttering smartish Billingsgate.

Now the point of view of Horace is that of a man who moves as a member of the society which he satirises, and is personally, on the whole, rather on good terms with it than otherwise. He makes up his mind to accept the established, and never pretends to be better than his neighbours. Poor Swift's *sæva indignatio* is unknown to him. If you went to him (or his representative in any age), and told him that the wrath of God was excited against this city, and that you had some thoughts of flying to the wilderness,—he would make a note of you for his next satire, and book you as a specimen of the mistaken class with the uncomplimentary title, who “while they shun vices, run into extremes.”¹ There are no red mullet in the wilderness; and because mankind are rogues and fools (as he is inclined to believe they have pretty often been), is that a reason why a satirical writer should be reduced to “locusts and wild honey?” No, no!

¹ “Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.”

Again, it may be true that there is the stain of blood on the imperial purple; all things considered, however, that is a kind of colour on which it does not show much. Are you sure you yourself would be a bit better were you emperor? The medium is safest, my friend. Shun extremes. What a block-head is a miser! And yet, what a madman is a spendthrift! Great wealth is but a splendid bore. On the other hand, poverty is a bore too. Real happiness is to be found in our little Sabine farm, given us by Mæcenas, to the envy of the "malignant vulgar," whom we (a little ostentatiously) despise. There we delight in *rus* (particularly when the Roman season is over, and the bores are off to Baiaë); and there we indite a charming little sapphic to the Faun, whom our ancestors feared and sacrificed to, though we are inclined to imagine him, on the whole, a fabulous animal. There we get a book by daylight; and there, with a few wise friends, we discuss, not the merit of this or that dancer, but the nature of good and right, with other edifying topics.

→ The Satires and Epistles of Horace give us as perfect a picture of himself as we could desire; and this alone is a proof that he was a genuine man. He knew the world, and his own weaknesses too; and yet he has painted himself,—no flattering or fallacious figure either. To himself we owe it, that we can

see, with the mind's eye, the image of that little pudgy dark man, with somewhat weak eyes, and a slovenly, sauntering, abstracted gait. He lets in light upon himself constantly. We see him strolling along the Sacred Way, where the famous Bore seized him, whom he has drawn so amusingly.¹ In a very characteristic piece, he makes his slave Davus take him to task for his failings.² Davus avails himself of the Saturnalia to turn satirist of his master: and it is a fine specimen of what, in English, we call dry humour, to see Horace, after listening to the fellow's exordium, turn round sharply to inquire "What he's driving at?" "At you," the rogue answers; and proceeds to taunt him with just the failings a stern moral reviewer might tax him with. "You praise the old morality of the Roman Plebs," says he; "but you are not the kind of man to live among them, if you had the chance. At Rome you praise a country life; and if nobody happens to ask you to dinner, you break into panegyrics on simple meals."

Old Davus was quite right, as Horace has ingeniously made him. He was a perfect man of the world, with just enough poetic taste and feeling to make his supper-crown of roses or parsley,—genuine

¹ Sat. lib. i. 9. *Ibam forte, &c.* Our Oldham has imitated it very well.

² Sat. lib. ii. 7.

roses or genuine fresh parsley. He was a good-natured elegant-minded man, and quite consistent. He laughed at the world, or at himself, with impartiality. With no very high views of nature or life, he was perfectly free from cant; and I believe that if we had known him personally, we should have liked him better than we do even from his books. He made rather too much of Augustus to please me; but probably he thought a despot better than civil war; and any way he knew that the empire was just the state of things for him. Peace, and a society left to ripen into forms fit for the satirist, were his very first necessities.

It is easy to say that he was irreverent, worldly, and selfish. I would not undertake to vindicate him against men like Knox or Luther,—the great ones of the highest class. In the nature of things, the sacred man and the humorous one are two different kinds of men. I bow to the first, and do him homage: but the humorist has his own vocation in this world; and if he is true to the best of his nature, he has a right to high respect likewise. The age imposed two tasks on Horace in his capacity of man of genius:—the delineation of the old classic life, which was waning out; and the delineation of the new corrupt luxurious life, which had come in. The first he performed in his lyrical, the second in his satirical works. I am quite confident that he

looked on the national beliefs as mere stuff for fancy-pictures: but, any way, these pictures are of high value to us; and it would be difficult to overrate the influence, at all times, of extreme good sense and social wisdom (such as abound in his Satires and Epistles) on the civilisation and culture of mankind.

When I call him worldly, therefore, I use it only as a term of description, and intend no offence to the memory of the grand little man, whose writings have helped to civilise the world, and largely aided in emancipating us from noxious and asinine superstitions, when they were first circulated at the revival of learning.

It is extremely difficult to give a notion of the literary charm of his Satires. As he says himself, ridicule cuts often more deeply than fierceness. I do not call him a bitter man. Much of his satire is just pleasantry. When, for instance, he gives us a sketch of the absurd supper of a *parvenu*, drawing the pompous, ill-bred, over-gorged Nasidienus,¹ we laugh good-naturedly. The fellow swaggers and chuckles over every item of his own feast to the men he is entertaining; insinuates with extreme good taste, to begin with, that the *sanglier* is quite sound; and when the wine is brought in by a dusky Indian (for of course he must have an Indian, as

¹ Sat. lib. ii. 8.

it was the mode), he turns to the greatest man he has managed to secure, and says, "Cæcuban, Mæcenas?—but we have Alban and Falernian, if you prefer them!" He harangues on his dishes, to prove that all is perfectly *comme il faut*; and turns palpably paler, when two of the young fellows, in sheer boredom, set in for severe drinking. Nothing can be more dramatic than the way in which Horace puts it before you: but for all that, would he have scorned Nasidienus? I dare say he would have dined with him with the utmost complacency, and was probably present at this very feast. He acquired that knowledge of Roman life by going about in society; and he shows a copious knowledge of cookery.

His Songs would give you a notion that he indulged in a romantic sort of dissipation. This arises from their not being rightly viewed as fancy-pictures—pictures on the ivory of the Latin language,—of old Lesbian life, and Ionian life, farther south, and long before. To me Horace seems a far homelier, simpler old gentleman than the classical conventionalists would have you suppose. A little, stoutish, weak-eyed, satirical, middle-aged man, sitting—with what hair he had left, smeared with Syrian ointment—crowned, under a vine, drinking, in company of a Greek young woman, with an ivy crown on her head, playing or dancing,—is to me a ludicrous ob-

ject. I do not think that the simple and philosophic Horatius, with his eye for satire, was much given to this mode of enjoyment. I am pretty sure that he did enjoy himself; but I rather fancy him eating a too luxurious dinner now and then, cramming himself with tunny-fish, muscles, oysters, hare, thrushes, peacock, and whatever else was going; and atoning for it by much quiet and a little rustication in his farm. I am certain that he was, in the main, a homely little man; and that the finish and elegance he shows in his writings did not appear so conspicuously in his person and in the objects about him.

Of the life of Juvenal we know next to nothing. But he, too, has stamped his own character on his works; and perhaps it will be better now to bring him into the field, that we may look at the two great satirists together, and illustrate our theme by comparing and contrasting them. Let us place by the side of the philosophic man of the court of Augustus a darker and sterner figure, one who had seen every thing that Horace saw—corrupt—ripened into sheer abomination; and who has left us his protest against Rome the sinner in lines of blood and fire.

We hear that Juvenal followed the profession of an advocate; that he read his satires to audiences; that he was exiled under pretence of an honourable

employment; and that he ended his life, heart-sick, far up the Nile.¹ This may or may not be true. A late editor of note determines his career within the periods of the 42d year after Christ and the 122d year.² This makes his birth just half a century posterior to Horace's death. He was thus a youth under Nero; had seen probably the miserable Vitellius dragged, gasping from fat and terror, out of his palace, with hands fastened behind him, to be murdered;³ had undoubtedly been a spectator of the career of Domitian. Well, here was a good school for a satirical writer! He lived with wide-open eyes, a man of real satirical genius, in a period precisely requiring a satirical man. Accordingly, his sixteen satires have, in all ages, been the objects of high admiration, not only for their qualities as satirical

¹ This is the common old narrative which goes under the name of Suetonius. The story of Juvenal's death, as there represented, seems generally exploded now;—and Juvenal is a writer who has been much elucidated within the last quarter of a century. We must rest contented with knowing that he was come to man's estate during Domitian's reign (A.D. 81-96), and that he probably survived to Hadrian's (A.D. 117-138). He was generally read, till lately, in the edition of Ruperti, which first appeared in 1800. The recent interpretations of difficulties will be found in the unpretending and excellent *Thirteen Satires* by Mayor (Cambridge, 1853), which I had not seen when I wrote this lecture.

² Heinrich. See also Professor Ramsay's art. "Juvenal" in Smith's *Dict. of Biog.*

³ A scene described with incomparable power by Tacitus, *Hist.* lib. iii. c. 84, 85.

poems, but for the insight they give us into the Roman life under the empire.

It was a monstrous and unnatural period, that in which Juvenal lived,—of gigantic opulence and titanic sin; a time both of blood and luxury; when the world ate and drank more, and lied and blasphemed more, and was at once more knowing and more superstitious than it has ever been known to be. Something tropical is the effect that entering into it produces on the imagination which still retains any healthy northern simplicity of character. You gasp for air. The soul is in an atmosphere close and hot; cloudy with coarse perfume; where the flowers and the vegetation have, with monstrous proportions, something glaring and ghastly in their beauty, and something sickly in their breath. Foul figures of every land swarm round you: brawny murderers from the Danube, and dusky greasy scoundrels from the Nile. All that is bad is near. There are sounds of revelry, which are allied with unutterable shame. The clashing of cymbals and the notes of lutes, the gleam of gold and of wine, do not charm here; they terrify. The smoke of the wicked feasts blots out the heaven above you, and, like the drifting smoke from a funeral pile, is heavy with the odours of death.

This was a scene worthy of qualities much higher

than those of a Wit. To laugh at Vice, and show Vice, what she is too ready to forget, that she has many points in common with the fool; to pluck Murder by the sleeve, and quiz him because he has forgotten to wipe the blood off his face; to laugh at Sin and Wickedness for eating peas with a knife,—is the kind of business that a merely worldly satirist has to perform. There are ages which demand a different kind of treatment; and here was one of them. Accordingly, in Juvenal there is a degree of earnestness and of purpose, and a heartiness of scorn, which are not the least attractions about that sturdy satirist, and underlie his coarse humour, and his fierce epithets, and his bitter laughter. He is a big, brawny fighting-man; and if his coat is clumsy, and his fist coarse, you must remember the “mills” he has been in. He was perpetually out in that grand ring, as the champion of old Rome—old Rome against the empire was his cause. I do not know that he made much by the fighting, personally, in his lifetime; probably he was too gallant a fellow to mind that. But he has won the fight in time. The essence of him is alive and triumphant; and his “belt” hangs up as a constellation in literature, like the belt of Orion in the firmament.

There are many moral and literary differences between Horace and Juvenal: beneath them lies, as the main one, of course, the different sort of satiric

impulse at bottom. Horace was scarcely ever angry; and he is a clear-seeing fine-minded man, with a talent for dramatic and personal exhibition of folly. He gives many fine examples of the absurdity of avarice, for example; of any of the extremes which mankind so inconsistently exhibit in every thing. Every thing has its ludicrous aspect; and that Horace lays hold of. He was a good-tempered man, a well-balanced man, of high taste and breeding; and how spiritedly will he expose,—I say expose, by making it appear in action, rather than denounce,—absurdity, meanness, ostentation! He takes them, usually, in their relation to society. Society—the cultivated, observing, reflecting section—is his standard. If he attacks any thing as hateful, he shows its contrast to what a polished sensible person must think of it. In one excellent satire he introduces a Stoic, proving all the world almost mad; and a very good case he makes of it. He takes the old Greek heroes to task in the spirit of a man of the world, just as he would take a contemporary. “Son of Atreus, why do you deny burial to Ajax?” “I am a king.” “Just so: plebeian as I am, I ask no further.” The king permits him to proceed. He interrogates him again: “Why putrefies Ajax, the second hero of all the Greeks, that Priam and his people may exult?” “The madman killed a thousand sheep,” goes on the monarch. “What! and

you, when you determined to kill, instead of a calf, your sweet daughter at the altar at Aulis,—were you in your right mind?" Here, you see, is his point of view. All sense of the solemn and awful nature of the tradition, as an instance of dark early faith, is lost. The case is decided like any common case demanding the opinion of a shrewd practical fellow. Many a case of madness is brought forward by the Stoic (who thus represents, for the hour, Horace's satirical mood); but the satirist very characteristically makes his mouthpiece bear the brunt of the unbridled attack, and, with much facetiousness, prays for him, in exchange for his wisdom, "that the gods will endow him with a barber."

—A cheerful humorous man, with all his satirical bias; and who was undoubtedly disposed not to be ferocious in his views of people, because he was conscious of a good disposition in himself in life, and inclined to be hopeful of others' intentions too.

Many of Horace's pieces are, accordingly, sketches of life and manners, in which the satire is more incidental and casual than direct and determinate. But Juvenal has usually a most unmistakable intention to lash something and somebody. He gropes about, like the giant in the nursery-tale, with his "fee-fo-fum," smelling prey, and prepared to lay hold of it. He laughs and hates. He had abundant subjects to attack; and his point of view is the

old Roman one. The nobility are degenerate, the people degraded, the emperors monsters; and scoundrels born slaves, bloated with wealth, are prominent in the general infamy. He sallies out against all; and his laugh and his abuse are so strong and so reckless, that they give one some notion of what such humour as that shouted out in the wake of the triumphal car must have been. It is a fact as certain as it sounds extraordinary, that the Romans used to have buffoons, or a buffoon, as part of the funeral ceremony.¹ There are times when Juvenal's fun gives one a glimpse of such a portentous figure; a representative of the comic element present amidst the ghastliest and most painful spectacles.

The common distinction drawn between these two great satirists is, that Horace was the master of ridicule, and Juvenal of invective; that ridicule is the more rare and delicate gift; and this once laid down, follows Horace's superiority. No doubt this is extremely convenient to people who wish to have a kind of *memoria technica* of criticism in their heads, so as to be able to give each author his epithet, and then leave him labelled—and neglected. This may be convenient. You remember Pope's lines in one of his imitations of Horace?

¹ There was a functionary called the *archimimus*, who marched along representing the defunct person's doings and sayings. Suetonius has a good story about the one who officiated at the funeral of Vespasian,—*Vesp. c. 19*.

“In all disputes where critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson’s art,
Of Shakspeare’s nature, and of Cowley’s wit ;
How Beaumont’s judgment checked what Fletcher writ ;
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow ;
But for the passions, Southern sure, and Rowe.”

These good old traditionary distinctions are, of course, founded on truth. But to understand any of these authors at all well, you would have to be much more minute; to determine the nature in Jonson, and the art in Shakspeare; while to say only that Cowley was noted for wit, would not serve to discriminate him from Swift or George Canning.

If it be meant that Juvenal had not a singular talent for ridicule, had not brilliant and striking wit,—something is meant that is not true. The fact is, he is prickly all over with touches of ridicule. In the fourth satire he has given us what is an admirable specimen of it, in the form and style of the mock-heroic. The heroes here are Domitian and the senators.

—With extreme gravity he begins, that it was in the days when the last of the Flavian family was lacerating the half-dead world, and Rome was serving a bald Nero, that a huge turbot came into the Adriatic. The fisherman who made the haul destined it at once to the High Pontiff; for, says our

friend, spies would certainly have betrayed the man who had dared to buy or eat a fish of these proportions; and officials would have declared, if needful, that it had escaped from the emperor's fish-pond. Every haste was made with it; doors fly open; the senators pause outside, impressed by the important news, and waiting. "Accept, sir," says the bearer, "accept a fish too great for private hearths! Let this be a genial day. Consume a turbot reserved for these ages. He glories in being caught!"

But here a difficulty occurs,—no dish is large enough. The council are summoned, and the mag-nates of the land assemble to determine how the fish shall be dressed. Each senator is hit off in a few lines of description, sometimes even touchingly and gravely; for Juvenal alternates between farce and tragedy,—which makes him affecting as well as amusing. Crispinus, a monster of wealth, who had been an Egyptian slave, comes in, scented so as to smell like two funerals. Another is ludicrously introduced,—not by, here comes Montanus, but by, Montanus's belly comes in. There is a contest of flattery. One cries out, as if inspired, "This is the omen of some great and illustrious triumph. You will capture a king, or hurl a Briton down from his place." "Shall it be cut?" is the solemn question put. "No," cries Montanus; "be this disgrace far from it! Let some noble dish be instantly made for it. But

from this time, Cæsar, potters must accompany your camp!"

"That sentiment, worthy of the man," says Juvenal, "triumphed." He characteristically concludes, by bursting out with—"And better if he had given to work like this the time he employed in murders. But he perished as soon as the rabble began to fear him. This destroyed the man who was wet with the blood of the Lamiæ!"

Juvenal is a more exciting writer than Horace. He is more pictorial and startling. His colouring is brighter. He abounds in flashes of glowing fancy. When he would illustrate the extreme of effeminate dandyism, he tells you that the Roman "swells" had light rings for summer wear, when they could not be expected to bear heavy ones.¹ He illustrates always unscrupulously and strongly. "Now," he says, "every altar has its Clodius. What should I do at Rome? I cannot lie." But it is an element in him never to be forgotten, that he has gleams of poetic pathos, and moral reflections, worthy of the gravest and purest souls; as in the passage where he speaks

¹ "When one of Nilus's rout, a servile pate,
Crispinus a Canopian (whiles in state
His shoulder does his purple cloak recall)
Upon his sweating fingers fans his small
Summer-rings, and a larger jewel's weight
Shuns as a burden."—HOLYDAY.

On this passage, see G. Long, *Classical Museum*, vol. i. p. 371.

of the miseries of old age, of out-lived friends and relations, "and the urns full of sisters;" when he says of one, "Let him heap gold in mountains, and love no one, and be loved by nobody;" when he speaks of tears as being the best evidence of the qualities of human nature; and many others.¹ He startles with a kind of sudden sarcasm; as when, alluding to the punishment of parricide, where the victim was hurled into the river in a sack with a cock and an ape, he pities the ape as an innocent sufferer. He had not Horace's elegance, nor so well-balanced a judgment; but in sheer wit, brave manliness, hot eloquence and energy, no satirist has ever surpassed him.

I wish I could convey to you, by introducing modern men of our own, some image of these two great writers. Let me try, though with all modesty, and a full sense of the difficulty of the task. Take, as a basis, Swift's keenness and his ferocity; add a strong dash of Hogarth's humour; and tinge the whole with an infusion of the funeral poetry of Gray,—you have a notion of Juvenal. Now for Horace. Take sense like Franklin's, only with an air of higher breeding; mild and thin-flowing humour, like Addison's, minus the Christianity; abundant quantities of Chesterfieldan shrewdness and wit, with gaiety

¹ The celebrated "Maxima debetur puero reverentia," in his fourteenth, is an example; it is specially praised in the *Rambler*.

like Lady Wortley Montagu's; add a fair dose of Campbell's poetic spirit, and Washington Irving's poetic taste,—and you perhaps have something that gives you a glimpse of Horace.

On the whole, I am happy to say that Horace and Juvenal are very fairly represented in our English literature. Our own great satirist, Pope, spent many hours in transfusing the Horatian spirit into the mould of the language of his own day. I shall take the liberty to read to you some specimens of his *Imitations of Horace*. Here are a few from his version of the Second Satire of the Second Book :

“What, and how great, the virtue and the art,
 To live on little, with a cheerful heart
 (A doctrine sage, but truly none of mine):
 Let's talk, my friends, but talk before we dine,
 Not when a gilt buffet's reflected pride
 Turns you from sound philosophy aside;
 Not when from plate to plate your eyeballs roll,
 And the brain dances to the mantling bowl.

.

'Tis yet in vain, I own, to keep a pother
 About one vice and fall into the other;
 Between excess and famine lies a mean;
 Plain, but not sordid; though not splendid, clean.
 Avidien and his wife (no matter which,
 For him you'll call a dog, and her a bitch,)
 Sell their presented partridges and fruits,
 And humbly live on rabbits and on roots;

One half-pint bottle serves them both to dine,
 And is at once their vinegar and wine.
 But on some lucky day (as when they found
 A lost bank-bill, or heard their son was drowned),
 At such a feast, old vinegar to spare,
 Is what two souls so generous cannot bear.
 Oil, though it stink, they drop by drop impart,
 But souse the cabbage with a bounteous heart.

.
 How pale each worshipful and reverend guest
 Rise from a clergy or a city feast !
 What life in all that ample body ! say,
 What heavenly particle inspires the clay ?
 The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines
 To seem but mortal, e'en in sound divines.

.
 Who has not learned fresh sturgeon and ham-pie
 Are no rewards for want and infamy ?
 When luxury has licked up all thy pelf,
 Cursed be thy neighbours, thy trustees, thyself :
 To friends, to fortune, to mankind a shame ;
 Think how posterity will treat thy name,
 And buy a rope, that future times may tell
 Thou hast at least bestowed one penny well.
 ' Right,' cries his lordship ; ' for a rogue in need
 To have a taste is insolence indeed ;
 In me 'tis noble, suits my birth and state,—
 My wealth unwieldy, and my heap too great.' ”

He concludes very well :

“ What's property, dear Swift ? you see it alter
 From you to me, from me to Peter Walter :

Or, in a mortgage, prove a lawyer's share ;
 Or, in a jointure, vanish from the heir ;
 Or, in pure equity (the case not clear),
 The chancery takes your rents for twenty year :
 At last it falls to some unworthy son,
 Who cries, ' My father's damned, and all's my own.'
 Shades that to Bacon might retreat afford
 Become the portion of a booby lord ;
 And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
 Slides to a scrivener or a city knight.—
 Let lands and houses have what lords they will,
 Let us be fixed and our own masters still."

Juvenal has not been quite so fortunate as his predecessor and countryman ; that is, he has never had such an exquisite and sympathetic representation as Horace owes to Pope. He has been very frequently translated, but not adequately in his totality. Dryden has done five of the Satires;¹ and

¹ He did the First, Third, Sixth, Tenth, and Sixteenth; and the book was published in 1693. Two translations of Juvenal had appeared before his, in our language; that of Barten Holyday, D.D. archdeacon of Oxford; and that of Sir Robert Stapylton, knt.—Stapylton's was published in 1647, Holyday's in 1673; but Holyday's, it appears, was first written. Neither of these works, from their crabbed and old-fashioned style, will ever be read but by the curious. For instance, Holyday translates

"Quo tondente gravis juveni mihi barba sonabat:"

"He whose officious sizzors went snip, snip,
 As he my troublesome young beard did clip."

Stapylton is not so quaint as Holyday; but Holyday's copious

with fine paraphrastic vigour and freedom, giving the spirit and the humour, and sometimes so well, that I must apologise for not reading them. Rome under the Empire was Rome; and Juvenal was Juvenal: and the relation between these two produced a good deal that was fitter for the taste of 1693 than 1853. Early in this present century Juvenal was translated also by William Gifford, of the *Anti-Jacobin* and the *Quarterly*; and though the *Critical Review* cut the book up (“reviewing it,” says sturdy Gifford, “as the ancients planted basil—with cursing and swearing”), it is a valuable translation.¹ I have decided, then, to try and give you a taste of the quality of this old master by reading, first, from Dr. Johnson’s imitations of him, viz. *London* and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*; and next, from the translation of Gifford. By combining the ideas conveyed, you will see the vigour and philosophical declamation, and also the grim and homely humour of the man, in some degree, at all events. I begin with Dr. Johnson.

“By numbers here from shame or censure free
All crimes are safe, but hated poverty:

commentary still retains its value, and testifies to his learning. Holyday was a friend of Ben Jonson’s. His *Juvenal* has some curious illustrations.

¹ Gifford’s *Juvenal* (with his very curious and interesting autobiographical sketch prefixed) was published in 1802. The quotations which follow in the text are taken from the first edition.

This, only this, the rigid law pursues ;
 This, only this, provokes the snarling Muse :
 The sober trader at a tattered cloak
 Wakes from his dream, and labours for a joke !
 With brisker air the silken courtiers gaze,
 And turn the varied taunt a thousand ways.
 Of all the griefs that harass the distress,
 Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest :
 Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart
 Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart."

This is from *London*, published in 1738, when the great, wise, and worthy Samuel Johnson was twenty-nine years of age ; and for this *London* he received ten guineas—money very welcome to the great man just then. But to proceed :

"Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
 Shall Wolsey's wealth with Wolsey's end be thine ?
 Or liv'st thou now with safer pride content,
 The wisest justice on the banks of Trent ?
 For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
 On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight ?
 Why, but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
 With louder ruin to the gulfs below ?
 What gave great Villiers to the assassin's knife,
 And fixed disease on Harley's closing life ?
 What murdered Wentworth, and what exiled Hyde,
 By kings protected, and to kings allied ?
 What but the wish indulged, in courts to shine,
 And power too great to keep or to resign."

One of the finest specimens of Juvenal's rhetorical grandeur is his account of Hannibal in this Tenth Satire. It is the very essence of philosophical melancholy—a frame of mind which his age produced in all the better-hearted of the world. A great Roman in those days, who was not a satirist, and did not choose to be patronised by slaves, had no alternative but retirement or (what was often resorted to) suicide. To the true descendants of the conquerors of the world, one of the few things left was to die.

Johnson finds a good modern parallel in Charles XII., and has these vigorous lines :

“The march begins in military state,
 And nations on his eyes suspended wait.
 Stern famine guards the solitary coast,
 And winter barricades the realms of frost.
 He comes, nor want nor cold his cause delay !
 Hide, blushing glory, hide Pultowa's day !

 But did not Fate at length her error mend ;
 Did no subverted empire mark his end ;
 Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound,
 Or hostile millions press him to the ground ?
 His fall was destined to a narrow strand,
 A petty fortress and a dubious hand.
 He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
 To point a moral, or adorn a tale.”

Among Juvenal's more humorous efforts is the fifth, in which he inveighs amusingly enough against

the toady of the period—a certain species of hanger-on of the wealthy, and those who were still called the noble,—who seems to have had hard times of it. Probably there is some exaggeration in his account of the way these unhappy dogs were treated; if not, the days must have been bad indeed for the “diner-out,” who, poor fellow—if he consented to sit as a humble trencher-man—at least deserved his share of what was going. But hear Gifford’s rendering of the contrary :

“ Before thy patron cups of price are placed,
 Amber and gold, with rows of beryl graced ;
 Cups thou canst only at a distance view,
 And never trusted to such guests as you !
 Or if they be, a faithful slave attends
 To count the gems and watch your fingers’ ends.
 You’ll pardon him, but lo ! a jasper there,
 Which cannot be preserved with too much care.
 For Virro, like his brother peers of late,
 Has stripped his fingers to adorn his plate.

.
 From such he drinks ;—thou drain’st the four-lugged pot,
 The pipkin of the Beneventine sot !”

But, though perhaps a wise caution was here exercised with the cups, why had not the fellow his fair proportion of the eatables ? Let us go on.

“ But, lo ! a lobster introduced in state,
 Whose ample body stretches o’er the plate,—

With what a length of tail he seems to scorn
 The wretched guests, as by them proudly borne
 He passes on, with herbs and pickles crowned,
 And comes before his master with a bound !
 Thou hast a crab, with half an egg prepared,
 A supper for the dead—in an old shard.

.
 A lamprey of the largest size, and caught
 Near howling Scylla, is to Virro brought :
 To thee they bring an eel, whose slender make
 Bespeaks a near relation to the snake.

.
 You champ on spongy toad-stools—hateful treat !
 Fearful of poison in each bit you eat :
 He feeds secure on mushrooms, fine as those
 Which Claudius erst—imperial glutton—chose
 To feast on ; till, with one more fine, his wife
 Ended at once his feasting and his life.”

He concludes, and most probably you will agree with him, that Virro, after all, fed the sycophant very much according to his merits.

So much by way of specimens. I may have partially succeeded in showing to you the points of distinction between these famous men :—between the man of the world, who is philosophical and moderate, and the fiery reformer, whose laughter is equally healthy, and whose indignation, however it express itself, is a genuine utterance of emotion. Both of them were of simple tastes and habits, as they have

described themselves. Horace, in spite of his great associates, loved at times to trot out on his cropped mule; to chat with the country folk, and ask the price of oil and grain; to wander out and see how the busy hum of men was going on in the Forum or the Circus; to attend at the religious rites in their turn, too, as part of actual life. Home he went after such duties as these, in the soft Italian afternoon,—to the simple meal prepared for him, a salad and macaroni not forgotten, with his little goblets, one of wine and one of water, on a table covered, we may be sure, with a snow-white, though not a splendid cloth; then came his sleep; and he rose early,—wandered out, reading and meditating; and so the day again went by. Let us think of him, when we do think of him, as such a man as this,—as a wise, genial, calm spirit; yes, and worthy too of something better than the admiration of Augustus, and a tomb by the side of his splendid patron. The world cannot often have heard more cheerful and more charming talk than must have been that of a Horatian party, when the men of genius met by themselves, and Virgil's mild and pure spirit brought with it an atmosphere of healthy peace; and the tender and amorous Tibullus told them how Delia should gather apples for them, if they would come and put themselves under the protection of his long-descended Penates.

I doubt not that the calm and moderate spirit, which was the basis of Horace, increased in strength, as a characteristic, as he drew near to the fifty-seventh year of his age, which ended him. What is called his *nil admirari* doctrine was the expression of that temperament. Not to wonder! To look up at the heaven, with its revolving starry glories, and feel that no vulgar fear should be inspired by that spectacle in the wise man; to have no foolish love of applause or wealth, no contempt of common life, yet no servility to pleasure; to occupy the firm medium, and defy the blasts of fortune or the threats of fate. This is the position of the Horatian philosopher. He does not dread, and he does not waver; but neither is he, however, too much given to enthusiasm, to reverence, or to love. It is as lofty a philosophy as a man of the world can get, perhaps, out of life; it was undoubtedly the most natural one to Horace; and there seems some strong affinity between it and particular stages of national civilisation.—For at this hour a version of it has hordes of disciples in England; and the Horatian tone of thinking is more consonant to the average mind than the tone which prevailed among our own ancestors in the days of Queen Elizabeth.

Juvenal also appeals to our sympathies, not only as a satirist, but in his private personality, as a quiet and wise old Roman spirit, who knew the beauty of

a simple and genial communion of hospitality, quite different from the "suppers of Nero" and the dinners of Crispinus. His eleventh Satire, in which he asks Persicus to a modest entertainment, promising him a kid innocent still of grass and the willow—a plump kid—but with more milk than blood in him—with no lack of rural delicacies, and a modicum of simple wine—comes in with a strange effect, with a fresh genial influence, like a breath from the old hills of Italy. "You shall hear the verses of the *Iliad*, and of Virgil," says the old satirist. And why shall we not think of him, too, as a manly, healthy, and lovable man? He is by no means as polite as Horace; but his mental vigour is equal to any body's; and, after all, he had deeper laughter than Horace's, too,—something, with its virtues and its vices, more like what we understand by the genuine Roman character. Coarse laughter, fierce jests he has; but with them, quite startling moral aphorisms; while at times there comes from him a kind of prophetic wail, that touches the heart more than any laughter; a cry as of the old blood, shed in the cause of the Republic, "crying from the ground!" The presence of such an element as this stamps the satirist with a moral superiority. From the heart it comes (however the speaker's other inferiorities may qualify it), and all else is comparatively commonplace beside it.

But, after all, whom Time has joined, let not Criticism too eagerly "put asunder." In the world's history, these men's spirits have worked together in union, each in its own way. We meet them again and again in the world's history, making their separate protests. Whenever a base system is falling, the handwriting of both is seen on the wall. Their office was to appeal to the human mind and heart against the evils which time and corruption bring in their train. As long as any human society shall have impostors and rogues triumphant, the shades of these dead old Romans will be found stirring, like *banshees*, near them, and prognosticating doom!

ERASMUS, SIR DAVID LINDSAY,

AND

GEORGE BUCHANAN.



LECTURE II.

ERASMUS, SIR DAVID LINDSAY, AND
GEORGE BUCHANAN.

It was not to be expected that an event like the Reformation would happen in the world without our friend the Satirist having a hand in it. Whenever great changes and convulsions are at work in human society,—when the king grasps his sword, and the priest his crucifix, and the soldier mounts his horse,—at such times the satirical writer seizes his pen, and contributes his share of exertion to the general movement. As the men whom we last dealt with spent their faculties in exposing and delineating, for their times and our own, the corruptions of a state of life existing in a nation which had lost its great moral qualities,—so the men who are now to come before us devoted their faculties to an analogous and equally important task. The order of things which had supervened on the final corruption of the empire had itself, in its turn, and according to inevitable laws, advanced to a stage when immense changes were necessary. The religious man found that the machinery of his element was become disorganised;

and the intellectual man, born with those qualities of humour and moral insight which combine to form the great satirist, found that the world was in a condition when they must be employed honestly in the delineation and correction of innumerable base, dangerous, and ridiculous objects around him. Kindly Nature, in her genial abundance, gives every man some use for his faculty. She has not forgotten the humorist—light, warm-hearted, and quick-seeing,—with his shrewd eye and his brilliant laugh. The true satirist listens to the mighty mother, and joyfully obeys her; he has influence in time, just in proportion as he deserves it: and long after his death men love his memory, and his image becomes a household god in the *sacraria* of the nations.

I shadowed out to you, in the first of these Lectures, the general principles of my design. I wish, in every case, to select, for what exposition I am capable of, men of notable influence. I confined myself in my last to the two Roman satirists who have most contributed to form modern satire; and I now proceed to their earliest and most distinguished followers, all three of whom were the products of the revival of learning, and more or less represent the influence which the study of the ancient writers produced on the European mind. Erasmus, our first and most influential subject, is well known to have had Horace by heart. With him I begin, and

shall take the liberty to give you a sketch of his biography. His adventures, conversation, and habits of life were the counterpart of that brilliant and versatile mind, and that interesting and curious character, which together perhaps exercised as much influence on Europe as it has ever been the lot of a man of letters to do.

In the latter half of the fifteenth century, one Gerard, of the town of Tergou, within the boundaries of the Germanic empire, was enslaved by the attractions of Margaret, the daughter of Peter, a physician of Sevenbergen. Gerard was a lively and genial man, as we are told; and this was undoubtedly the opinion of Peter the physician's daughter! Gerard wooed her, promised to wed her, and she believed him. Poor Margaret, indeed, believed him only too implicitly,—and the result was, that in the neighbouring city of Rotterdam she gave birth one day to Erasmus.¹ Gerard the genial had occasion, it seems, to be at Rome. He was bound homewards, however, to fulfil his promise, when his relations wrote to him that Margaret was dead. Struck with shame and repentance, he rushed into priest's orders; and when he came again to Holland, found that he had raised

¹ There is no doubt that Erasmus was one of the great men of the bend sinister; and unfortunately he was the second offspring of Gerard and Margaret's affection. But there seems no reason to doubt, also, that the case admits of the palliations given in the text. See Bayle, art. *Erasmus*; and de Burigni, *Vie d'Erasmus*.

an impassable barrier to matrimony for ever. They lived apart; and when the boy was about twelve years old, they both died in quick succession, leaving (as a kind of compensation to Europe for the laws they had broken) this fair-haired grey-eyed boy—destined to be the head of the republic of letters in the sixteenth century. His birth has been commonly assigned to the year 1467; but Mr. Hallam prefers 1465; and I am sure we shall all be willing to accept that date on the authority of Mr. Hallam.¹

The fair-haired boy—for his hair in his boyhood was almost yellow—went to school at Daventer, learning all that was to be got at quickly enough,—as much Latin as the grammars of the day would permit, with a due share of the logic-chopping of the time. He was for a while a chorister in the Cathedral of Utrecht. As he grew up, it became a question to what special pursuit this youth of promise should be devoted. He was an eager, quick, passionate student, and soon assumed a distinct individuality even in name, calling himself “Erasmus,” after the Greek synonym of his patronymic—a common fashion among contemporary scholars.

The relations took council. It seems to have been a kind of custom then to devote youngsters

¹ *Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. note to p. 285. The truth is, that in two letters (Epist. 200 and 207) written in 1516, he speaks of himself as having entered his fiftieth year.

to what was called a "religious" life, shutting them up in "religious" (so called) houses, and somehow smuggling away their patrimony;—thus, you may say, ruining them body and soul, both. They drove poor Erasmus into a friars' establishment. His weak sensitive body could not bear fast-days or austerities; his fine sensitive spirit could as ill bear ignorance, gluttony, or hypocrisy. He was rebellious and unhappy: he fluttered and struggled against the wretched old iron bars of his Gothic cage; he, the light-seeking, the high-aspiring,—what could he be but unhappy! That head, which Nature had destined to wear a nimbus, was put under a cowl,—which was then as good as an extinguisher on a candle of mind. And so poor Erasmus languished. He was pining for the waters of Castaly—the blessed fountain of knowledge—the green groves of Academe: they shut him up inside huge prison-walls; and to satisfy his mind's thirst, they gave him muddy old logical and theological ponds to drink of, foul in taste and smell, covered at the surface with weeds old and new; and by no means free from dead dogs and other abominations.¹

We must never forget, in estimating the character

¹ "Fools and blockheads are generally thrust into these places," says Erasmus (Epistle to Grunnius). "If any finer intellect arises amongst them, he is kept down. There are prolonged potations daily, *non sine pudicitiae periculo*," &c. He afterwards obtained a dispensation from wearing the monastic habit, and so forth.

of Erasmus, this coercion in his youth. We never can know of him, more than of dozens of other men, what a happier and more natural development would have made of him. But we must take circumstances into account. The bent of his nature was not towards the priestly life in the days in which it pleased fortune to place him. But circumstances were too strong for him. He became regular canon, he became priest, being ordained by the Bishop of Utrecht at the age of twenty-five. He can only be looked on as a victim to this system. He had no vocation for it; it was not his place. He was a scholar, a man of letters, a humorist by mind and by character; and no wonder that his career was anomalous, and his position frequently dubious in consequence. I am not going to set up Erasmus as a very lofty kind of man before you. He is not one whom you feel any disposition to worship. I make my bow to him, and do him honour; but I do not stand uncovered, or impressed with any reverential awe before him. Only we must appreciate and love him too. We must remember that he was luminous, genial, generous, brotherly. Let us begin, then, by pitying him, in so far as he deserves our pity. When the heathens bring a calf to the altar, I feel no strong compassion; but what should we think if we heard of their seizing the fiery-hearted horse of Arabia, and robbing the world of his beauty and his power?

Good old mother Nature, however, is not easy to beat. The old dame loves her boys, and treats her brilliant darlings fairly enough. Erasmus's head might be tonsured, but that operation was performed on the outside of it. He remained in fact, in purpose, and in influence, a scholar, a literary man. It is curious to read and observe how shy he fought of preferment in his nominal profession. Give him money, if you like: he will take a little money; for the scholar must dine as well as the dunce; you cannot make soup of laurels:—yes, he will take a little money; also a jar of wine, if you choose (not sweet wine, for his constitution is delicate, and it does not agree with him), but sound, fine wine,—giving the preference to Burgundy, if you happen to have any of *that*. All he wants is to support life decently, while he writes his books, edits his Greek Testament, his St. Jerome, collects and discourses on Proverbs, or gives a free loose to his humorous heart, and lashes beggarly and ignorant monks. He does not want a living; he would rather have a pension—a smaller pension even. Literature is his vocation. They talked once of making him a bishop; “at which,” say the biographers, “he laughed.” Of course he did; and it is very easy to purse-up one's mouth into an ugly state of orthodox expression, and talk of his levity. But it was far better that he should have laughed, and steered clear of eccle-

siastical preferment, than that he should have crushed the natural man in him, and temporised, and been hypocritical! Better be a good humorist than a bad bishop! Erasmus is open to censure for failings and weaknesses, like mankind (clerical and laic); but it is quite impossible to deny, that in his relation to the Church he showed much intellectual honesty and personal self-denial.

In his career as a man of letters he had a hard and strange life of it for many years; and in informing oneself of the particulars, one meets innumerable causes for surprise, and opportunities of musing on the changed condition of Europe! How far off lie those days, though only some three hundred and fifty years have passed away since he looked out from the garden of Sir Thomas More's house at Chelsea, and saw the old Thames flowing away beneath him! He was first in London when about thirty-two years of age, having come from Paris, where he had been reading with pupils, acting as tutor to Lord Mountjoy, living at times in the castle of a great lady in the Low Countries. The life of a scholar in those days was a strange affair. Just as the minstrel of an earlier day had done, he wandered about, bringing with him knowledge as *his* music; asking little of the world but moderate pay, bread and meat, in exchange for Latin and Greek, for wisdom and wit. You trace Erasmus from spot to spot;—as in a dark-

lantern hunt at school, one got a glimpse of the boy with the lantern, by the occasional flash he threw out. He is in France, Germany, England,—always a little spot of light in places of darkness, superstition, ignorance, violence. But consider how his knowledge was acquired too; how different was the task of being a scholar then than in our day, with its grand apparatus of books, maps, globes; and an intellectual machinery so perfect, that you can turn out moderate *literati* as copiously as they make pins, getting a few yards of ordinary wire, and working them up, heads and all, in comparatively no time! To be a great author remains as difficult as ever; but in the days of Erasmus, you could hardly be a man of attainments without being a man of genius. The first editions of the Classics, works which now are the curiosities of libraries (and I believe fetch large sums, particularly if you can get a copy with the leaves uncut, which is a *bijou*), were slowly crawling out from the presses of Venice, Florence, and farther north sometimes, in Erasmus's younger days. He says once, in a letter, that "if he could get some money, he would buy *first* Greek books, and then clothes." There were about three men at Oxford capable of teaching Greek at that time. The great scholars, in fact, taught themselves,¹ and

¹ "Prorsus fui autodidactos"—he says, himself.

by huge personal exertions. It was a time of grand energy and indomitable enthusiasm. Europe began to learn, as, centuries before, she had fought, with a heroism that was demonic. Erasmus, Budæus, and those who followed these great leaders, were the Vikings of literature. They embarked on the sea of knowledge with hearts as daring as those with which our forefathers long before had spread their sails on the Baltic and the German Oceans!¹

Our authority for describing Erasmus's life and ways is very good,—a bulky collection of his letters. These are the main sources of his biography, which has been written copiously, though never very well.² His letters bear out what we hear of him,—that he was a fine, free, genial spirit, open-tongued and open-hearted; and it is from them that we learn

¹ "On the very day of his wedding, he (Budæus) withdrew from the company at least three hours, to spend them with his books," says Bayle.

² I know of no biography of Erasmus which can be called a work of art. We have three English "Lives" of him: Samuel Knight's, 1726 (chiefly relating to his connection with this country), Jortin's, and Charles Butler's. Of these, Jortin's is far the most important. It was published in two quartos in 1758 and 1760, and "takes as a groundwork" the previous biography by Le Clerc, being based, like it, on the Letters. It is arranged in the form of annals; and from its mass of information, and its excellent spirit, is of the highest value. But it is not a biography, in the sense in which the *Agricola* is a biography. The *Vie d'Erasmus* by de Burigni (Paris, 1757, 2 vols.) is also to be recommended to those interested in Erasmus's career.

the strange ways in which he replenished his exchequer, and the odd adventures, which give to his studious career,—to the career of a great scholar, an editor of Fathers, and a chief of the republic of letters,—a flavour of gipsy-like eccentricity, which, in our respectable and somewhat dull days, seems romantic and exciting.

I have said that he was over thirty years old when he first came to England; and on that occasion he made his first acquaintance with our famous More. The good old literary story goes, that they met at dinner, unknown to each other; and that, having had a brisk discussion, Erasmus exclaimed, "Either More, or goodness-knows-who!"—More rejoining, "*Aut Erasmus, aut Diabolus.*" These two worthies were always good friends. Together, at the time of this first English visit, they studied at Oxford, under Grocyn and Linacer. Erasmus was now preparing his *Adagies* (an evidence of his vast reading); but he was always poor, always looking out for somebody who would learn himself, or honour learning, and glad enough to get a pension of one hundred crowns per annum from Blount,¹ Lord Montjoy. "Money, money; learning, learning!" they were ill-matched associates. He

¹ William Blount, Lord Montjoy, of a well-known old English family. "This lord," says Jortin, "writes Latin much better than some famous doctors." Vol. i. p. 32.

was bent on going to Italy, to get a doctor's degree; but that necessitated a horse,—and any horse, except our mythical friend Pegasus, was not so easy to get. Among his patrons in those days was the Marchioness of Vere;¹ and there exists a letter, wherein Erasmus urges his friend Battus to go and dun her ladyship, and fairly stimulate that right honourable dame into doing something.

“You must go to her,” says he, “and excuse my shyness to her, on the ground that I cannot tolerate explaining my difficulties in person. You must tell her the need I am in; that Italy is the proper place to get a doctor's degree, and that Italy cannot be visited by a delicate man without a great deal of money; and that it is impossible for me to think of living shabbily there. Explain to her how much more honour I am likely to do her than those theologians she keeps about her: for they give forth mere commonplaces; I write what will live for ever. Tell her that fellows like them are to be met every where; while the like of me only appears in the course of many ages; that is to say,” adds he, humorously, “if you don't mind drawing the long-

¹ So the title is Anglicised. She was daughter of Wolsard de Borselle, Marshal of France, and widow of Philip, son of Antony of Burgundy, a natural son of Philip of Burgundy. She brought her husband *en dot* the seigneurie of Weere, in the Isle of Walcheren in Yeeland. So Burigni.

bow in the cause of friendship. What a discredit it would be to her, should St. Jerome appear discreditably for the want of a few gold pieces!"¹

A chief of the republic of letters stimulating a worthy lady in this style,—at the age of forty-one sleeping two in a bed with a brother philologer, and so forth,—is a strange spectacle to us. It is strange to see him paying in dedications, and remunerating in advice. But if any member of the said republic in our days (who, perhaps, makes a hundred times Erasmus's income, with only a hundredth part of his faculty and his scholarship) imagines for an instant that such conduct implies that Erasmus was not quite as honourable and worthy a man as himself, he commits an absurd error. If he even remorselessly asserts that the state of things was wholly false, he is in an equally mistaken state of mind. Various notable deductions may be made from this condition, and from the changes it underwent; and it is quite easy to show, that what Erasmus did, in those days, when it was a natural thing so to act, is not to be tried by the standard of a quite different state of society. The noble was then different from our noble; the man of letters was other than our man of letters. The noble was a far greater potentate, to begin with. Then, again, the social

¹ Ep. 92, written A.D. 1500. Battus was a faithful friend. "I know your old way of telling fibs in my favour," Erasmus adds.

world was more stringently and more intelligibly divided. You were noble, or you were a man of letters; you were *gentilhomme*, or not *gentilhomme*. Erasmus would no more have thought of writing himself down "gentleman" than he would have thought of calling himself a pasha. He was Erasmus of Rotterdam: a man of learning,—he planted himself on that brave assumption, and looked the world in the face from his own point of view. There was no "reading public;" but there was a body of leaders of Europe occupying its high places, and to them learning could naturally and justly appeal for its recognition; as to them, Courage in the ages before had appealed for its knight's spurs, and Piety for its monastic foundations. Things are often not quite so bad as they look. When a king or prince wrote to Erasmus, sent him a goblet or a clock, it was an honour, in a sense in which no king's gift would be one in our day. And further, it is by no means sure that the man of letters was not then more widely divided from the household fool than he has been known to be in what are called enlightened periods. Erasmus was a guest and dear friend of Sir Thomas More's, and occupied a different position in that family circle from Harry Patenson, the Chancellor's fool, whose figure may be seen significantly standing in the back-ground, in the picture of that noble group by Holbein. Let us

remember, that the accepting gifts entirely depends on the relation between giver and taker. While the noble was the natural giver, the taker was by no means necessarily as mean as such an act would make him in our time. Any one can illustrate the difference, by reflecting that he would cheerfully accept a "tip" from his grandfather; whereas he would probably knock a stranger down for offering the same pecuniary compliment.

Erasmus, one is glad to know, did achieve the visit to Italy, and the doctor's degree. They received him, a cardinal in particular, courteously enough. But by this time Henry VIII. had come to the throne (in 1509), and he was summoned to London. The courteous cardinal came down with a gift; our faithful Blount, Lord Montjoy, added one; and Erasmus began the journey on horse-back. Cannot one fancy a tranquil cob trotting along Alpine defiles, and through Southern vineyards, with the scholar on his back, a middle-sized man, with fair complexion and gray eyes, a good-natured intellectual face, musing over his *Encomium Moriae*, or Praise of Folly, which is to be written when he arrives in London? When he did arrive, his friend More entertained him, hospitable and intelligent as ever,—and at the *Encomium* he went, Latin flowing from him like a mother's tongue, as,

indeed, it had become to him.¹ He talked in it, wrote in it, lived in it, as a natural element, and never seems to have learned English, or Italian, or French. The subject of this his first strictly satirical book is purely humorous. Folly harangues the reader to prove her superiority to Wisdom. "See you not," says she, "that those who apply themselves to the study of philosophy, or to arduous business, get old in their very youth? whereas the fool is fat, neat, and comfortable, and will never feel any inconvenience of old age, unless the contagion of some wise man spoil him." He carries out the idea to the utmost; and shows how folly is needful to sweeten life every where. Of course, the satiric applications are innumerable; and the religious orders come in for their ample share. We hear of those "who erect a wax-candle to the Virgin, but do not emulate her in modesty and goodness. If there is any trouble to be undertaken,

¹ "It is certain that Erasmus did not employ in his style that scrupulous purity which is found in the works of the Ciceronians of his age: but the difference between him and them is, that their works, full of harmonious phrases, teach almost nothing; while his, full of useful and agreeable matter and learned observations, are read and re-read with pleasure and profit. Although his style is not of the highest perfection, it is far above mediocrity; and it has merited the esteem of two men of his age the best fitted to judge, Sadolet and Bembo." Burigni, *Vie d'Erasmus*, vol. ii. p. 489.

they leave it to Peter and Paul, who have plenty of leisure. The splendour and pleasure they take to themselves." The influence of this book was immense, as its circulation was. And, indeed, he has anticipated almost all the Satire of Europe. He was the fountain of Liberalism in the true sense. *He* disseminated every where, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, that spirit of practical sense, seasoned with genial pleasantry, which has been an element in every "reform"¹ from that time downwards; which abolished what was outworn in old feudal and mediæval influences; washed away pilgrimage when pilgrimage had become mere routine; modified old feudal funerals, and the huge early ceremonialism of European life—excessive pride of pedigree—false glory in mere war. When the street-boys laugh at the beadle, little as they know of Erasmus, they are working in his spirit. Goldstick ought to tremble at his name; and nothing but a dense skin prevents many a high official, performing mummeries and antique capers, of which the meaning has long since disappeared, from starting at the thought of his ghost.

It was just about this time that he visited Canterbury Cathedral;² and there saw the shoe of Thomas

¹ Need I say that "reform" is not used here in its technical political meaning?

² Knight's *Erasmus* (Jortin, vol. i. p. 36). There is an account

à Becket, all glittering with jewels, exposed to the devout pilgrim for kissing. He made good use of this sort of spectacle,—“For,” says he, “we kiss the old shoes and dirty handkerchiefs of the saints; and we neglect their books, which are the more holy and valuable relics. We lock up their shirts and clothes in cabinets adorned with jewels—but leave their writings to mouldiness and vermin.”—Very just, very true, we must admit. Let us welcome wisdom in any form. But here another remark must, in justice, be made. Erasmus seems to have kissed the old shoe himself, while he ridiculed the practice! That is what I do not like in him; and, unhappily, that act has a significance which is the key to much else in his career. Don’t kiss the shoe, and laugh at it too! I say;—Luther would not have done that!

It was likewise just then that he taught Greek at Cambridge. That was not a very profitable task in those days, particularly if the plague was flying about, which was the case at that time. But he was of what he saw in the cathedral, in the *Peregrinatio Religionis ergo* in the *Colloquia*. “You would have said,” says the interlocutor in the dialogue, “that Midas and Cræsus were beggars, if you had seen the gold and silver there. I sighed that there were no such relics in my own house!” This is his jaunty manner; and soon afterwards he goes on to inquire whether St. Thomas would not be better honoured by gifts to the poor, than in the way now adopted. However light the tone, the *matter* is always sensible, and the sentiment good.

not a man who was greedy for money; whether he asked it, or taught for it, he never wanted it or cared for it, except for the unavoidable necessity of keeping himself alive to do his work. We have various of his letters in those Cambridge days, when he was a middle-aged man, of very great reputation, and very ill off. A friend sends him a jar of wine by the Cambridge carrier; and receives the last one, empty, back. He finds it difficult to get a class. He complains that the king, Harry VIII., is always hunting; and there's no getting at him. A friend, who had promised him a horse, was out of the way when he sent to him about it,—“and so,” he says, “that fish escaped.” He does not like the Cambridge beer. He does not like sweet wine. Every now and then he runs up to town, and tells his correspondent to get a place for him—“a nest well sheltered from the wind, and a bright fire,” is all he requires. He would like to know when his “Mæcenas,” Montjoy, would be back: there—there was always a home for him; only when the master is out of town, the confounded steward (whom he calls Cerberus) makes it impossible for him to go there! More's is a hospitable mansion; but he is delicately afraid that More's worthy dame may consider so constant a guest as he is, somewhat of a bore.¹

¹ But he loved the English, in spite of his narrow means here:

Such is the tenour of these epistles. It is impossible to get on familiar terms with Erasmus without loving and admiring that genial cheerful spirit, which overflows, in poverty and ill-health, with perpetual wit and good-nature. Nothing damped that fine mind and courageous spirit of his. He went on ever with his studies; edited Latin Fathers; wrote moral and religious treatises; and performed a splendid service to Europe by publishing the first edition of the Greek Testament.

But not so much either his moral or theological works influenced mankind, and have preserved his name, as that Erasmian element of shrewdness and gaiety which characterised the *Encomium* and the charming *Colloquies*, and which played over every thing he wrote. He lashed the monks, who then swarmed in Europe, with a never-failing activity; and by the time he had gained his fame, he had hordes of enemies in every order in Christendom. They abused his life and writings, even when they were ignorant equally of his person and of Latin; and so strong was the effect they produced, that for a long time in Europe there prevailed a notion that to be a lettered man was to be hostile to religion.

“This I can truly affirm,” he says, “that there is no country which altogether has produced me so many friends, so sincere, so learned, so kindly, so splendid, so adorned with every sort of virtues, as that one city of London.” *Epist.* 114 (A.D. 1506).

Casaubon, writing sixty years after Erasmus's death, complains of this idiotic superstition.¹ It was an artful trick, this of the monks—this depreciation of learning; for of course they well knew, that ignorance once fairly established as a merit, their own superiority was undoubted!

How strong was the feeling of the importance of Erasmus's treatment of the abuses of the Church, we know from a saying which became current early in the times of the Reformation. "Erasmus laid the egg," they said, "and Luther hatched it." He was advanced in life, and at the height of his fame, when Luther's work began. This was the trying time for Erasmus. He was at the head of the men of letters; he had made himself known far and wide as a foe to abuses; and the reformers looked to him as a natural ally. On the other hand, he was a priest: he had never done any thing to dis sever himself from his formal position as a member of the Church;² and he dutifully got a dispensation from the Pope, allowing him meat on fast-days, as he could not tolerate fish. ("His stomach was Lutheran," he used to say.) "What part would Erasmus take?" people asked.—"What will Erasmus do?"—Every body made the

¹ In the preface to his *Treatise on the ancient Satire*, mentioned in *Lecture First*.

² Thus, in 1521, he applied for a brief to be allowed to read Luther's works.

inquiry: the one man whose business it was to answer it was the very person who did not know what to say.

Erasmus would have liked to stand aloof from it altogether. As a tranquil literary man, fond of his books, fast advancing on the wrong side of fifty, and, I am sorry to say, subject to premonitory touches of the gout, it was a terrible business for him. Any thing like Luther's spiritual depth, of course, he did not share, more than he shared the sordid character of those who would have burned Luther. He was more like Cicero than Luther. His soul did not dwell among the fiery splendours of Luther's spiritual atmosphere; but in a mild, healthy, classic region of good sense and cheerfulness. He had a genial contempt for bigots and ignoramuses. Would destiny but leave him alone, to live at Basle, to edit the *De Officiis* or the *Tusculan Questions*, to superintend the printing of a huge Father by his worthy friend Frobenius, to exchange letters with Budæus, to keep a sharp eye on his pensions, and to enjoy (moderately, however) that Burgundy, which is so much better for one's constitution than your mere "sweet wine!" Destiny was not so kind to the scholar. She said, "Come, you are of the wise heads of the world. What is your oracle in this great crisis?" People of the highest rank consulted that head; but when they wanted an oracle, they could only get a *bon-mot*.

It is with a feeling of melancholy, not unmingled with a sensation of humour, that one reads the narrative of Erasmus's conduct in this last period of his career. I don't think it takes away your affection for the man, though you are bound to admit that there are much higher men than he. But of those who assail him unscrupulously, not the tenth part have ever done a tenth of the good in the world that was done, after all, by our somewhat worldly friend. He did not join the Reformers. Nature had not made him a reformer. The Lutheran idea of faith was quite alien from his character. His light was not spiritual, but scientific; and we must remember, that though he stayed in the Church, he was not in his own conduct a part of her abuses. Indeed, that said light of intellect was to him, within his Church, a Davy's Safety-lamp; he carried it safely through all sorts of foul atmosphere, doing his work without explosions, and deserving credit for what work he did.

It was undoubtedly as a satirist of humour that his main influence was achieved; though of course all credit is to be given him for his other and general labours of scholarship, huge as they are. We have many specimens of the sharp rays of witty light he threw out aslant the clouds in those troublous and stormy times.

— The Elector Frederick sent for him at Co-

logne, just after Charles V. had been made emperor, wanting his opinion on the Lutheran question. He hesitated, and was pressed. "Luther," said he, "has done two things: he has attacked the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies." They pressed him often to answer Luther. He was wont to decline this job, with a good deal of quiet significance; a certain smile lurking beneath it, such as I fancy I can see under his face in Holbein's portrait. "Had not read him;" "Not equal to the task;" "Won't deprive the Universities of the honour;" and so forth. His friend Henkel had refused a bishopric. "He hath his reasons, I suppose," quoth Erasmus; "but as times go, it is better to be a hog-driver than a hog." "Nothing can be more easy than to call Luther a blockhead," is one of his sayings; "and nothing more difficult than to prove it." When the mob were destroying the images, he remarked, "that now was the time for them to work miracles; they had done plenty when there was no particular occasion." When Luther took the decided step of marrying his Catherine, whom he loved heartily (indeed put on a level with his Commentary on Galatians), there arose a cry from the pope's party, that now Antichrist might be expected; for there had long been a tradition that he would be the offspring of a monk and a nun. "If that be so," says Erasmus, "he must have appeared already a good many

times." The old humorist sat at Basle in those days, working at his books, and shooting out occasionally sun-arrows of this sort, which desolated the black ranks of the bigots; but any decided step he would not take. Accordingly he pleased neither party. The monks railed at him; the Reformers distrusted and abused him: he gave the final blow to Luther's good opinion of him by his controversial work on *Free-will*; and Luther's *Table-Talk* gives evidence enough of the intense dissatisfaction of the great Reformer, who expresses himself (the homely thunder-god that he is) about his conduct with his usual freedom. Like the rest of men, I fancy our humorist found life's evening tinged with melancholy from this and other causes. "If these men," (the monks), said he, "triumph, nothing will remain but to write the epitaph of Jesus Christ." He always spoke of the Reformation as "the tragedy;" saying "that it all arose from the hatred of the monks to literature." This was all he saw in it, and he thought Luther had been too violent; while, on the other hand, Sir Thomas More thought Erasmus himself too violent. And Erasmus had the pain of hearing that Sir Thomas had died in the way we all remember, by the headsman's axe. Sir Thomas More was fifteen years his junior, and they had been friends through life. It was Erasmus who sent Holbein over to England with his

portrait to Sir Thomas, who kept him in his house at Chelsea for two years, and employed him to paint a portrait of the family, which he sent by him to Erasmus, who acknowledged it in a letter, still extant, to Margaret the daughter, who married "son Roper," Sir Thomas's biographer. "I recognised them all," says he, "at once," addressing that learned and pious lady; "but none more readily than *you*. I seemed to myself to see the beautiful mind shining through the beautiful body;" and he desires his love and honour to her mother, whose "image he had respectfully kissed." A kindly warm-hearted man; not unworthy of the affection of that holy and peaceful household!

As age grew upon him, and as a set-off to troubles public and private, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his fame was fairly established. Whenever he visited a town, the authorities presented him with wine, which I hope was his favourite Burgundy.¹ The gout plagued him sadly; but he bore up very cheerfully. In 1532 he sent a one-eyed copyist of his (whom he nicknamed Polyphemus) to collect free-will offerings; in fact, to make a haul from the

¹ Honours were paid to him on these occasions, as to the potentates of the world. When he left Basle, to reside at Friburg for some years (he returned to Basle again, and died there), many people accompanied his horse, and some shed tears. He had letters and presents from all quarters, even from the highest quarters, frequently.

various potentates of Europe for the famous Erasmus. The money came readily enough; or if not, came cups, clocks, rings, shells, or other complimentary gifts. When he died, they found his bureau full of letters from great kings and lords; and a large collection of elegant ornaments, many of pure gold. He made a will; and left money to be spent in dowering portionless girls, and teaching poor boys,—two good charitable objects. His death took place at Basle on the 12th July, 1536, when he was over seventy years old.

His anomalous position; the inharmonious union in him of priest and man of letters; official of tradition and reformer of thought; of the ecclesiastical *status* and the humorist's sympathies,—all this has affected his reputation, and made his name a dubious one. Sometimes they fight for him; and one claims him for Luther, and one for the Pope, who, God knows, has most need of him! But if we look sympathetically at the man, and at the known effect of his works, it will be clear enough that his real intellectual and moral position was that of a man of letters, while his predominant quality as a writer was his peculiar humour. He was officially a priest, we all know; but by seizing a sheep, and marking P on it, you don't make it the less mutton. The orthodox laid hold of him in his youth, and did what they liked with him. It was of little service in the

long-run. "You have brought the wrong bird into your old nest, here, my worthy Church," Nature might have said: "he is too young yet to develop: but, behold! his plumage is growing; his throat is strengthening; he is feeling his instincts. This is not a magpie to fetch small pilferings to you: this is a sky-lark; and when the morning light dawns on him, he will soar up into it, and startle the world with his song!"

The *Encomium*,¹ the *Colloquia*, and the *Ciceronianus* (the last an amusing little treatise, levelled at certain Italian scholars, who were servilely attached to Ciceronian expression and words²), are choice specimens of the Erasmian vein. The base of his style (as of his character) is worldly good sense:³ so he has (as I remarked of Horace) quite a modern tone. If it were not for the learning and

¹ The bulk of his writings is theological; and on these, theologians, of course, must be left to pronounce. *Our* business here is with Erasmus the humorist, and, as far as we may venture to say that we know him, with Erasmus the man.

² See Bayle, art. *Bembo*, for some curious illustrations of this controversy. Some Italian ecclesiastics complained that reading St. Paul spoiled one's style!

³ "He was," Mr. Hallam says, "the first conspicuous enemy of ignorance and superstition, the first restorer of Christian morality on a scriptural foundation." (*Lit. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 352, and see also i. 349.)—Joseph Scaliger relates that his father saw his folly in having written against him, and that he was "un grand personnage." (*Scaligeriana*.)

the wit, you might sometimes think you were reading a cheap radical newspaper of our own period! He and his friend Sir Thomas More, who had a great intellectual likeness (though Sir Thomas's mind was more devotional than his), anticipated many of those "reforms" on which one occasionally hears people congratulating themselves, as if they had been first discovered by us, and our ancestors had been mere barbarians. They knew that foolish wars were the most foolish of all things; that punishments were too severe; and that much might be said against the punishment of death. I was glad to find the other day that our harmless friends of the Peace-Society had been looking up Erasmus. His spirit, in fact, was essentially that of a reformer, in the best sense. In the last age he would have gone to Ferney to see Voltaire (to whom Coleridge, in an excellent essay in the *Friend*, has likened him); and if Destiny had placed him in our time, with what delight should we listen to him, on the Gorham controversy, the Holy Coat at Treves, the late lamented General Haynau, the Pope's dignified journey to Gaeta, the Game-laws, the charitable society for supplying poor clergymen with old clothes; and other similar phenomena!

If I have at all succeeded in showing you what manner of man he was, you will look with a kindly interest at his portrait when you are next at Hamp-

ton Court. As for his character, it was, perhaps, more lovable than such as one deeply reverences. After all, what can we say of him but what Luther says, in his fine hearty way, about Cicero, whom Erasmus resembled, both in his strength and his weakness—it is a grand specimen of Luther’s heartiness—“I hope,” says he, “God will be merciful to him!”—

I now proceed to treat of two other great notabilities—less remarkable men—but worthy votaries of the Satiric Muse, and members of what was, in those days, a neighbouring nation. Do you not remember, in a poem that we all have read with pleasure at some time, a certain feudal figure, that comes out to greet Marmion, as that knight is advancing northward? Let us listen once again to the clear, manly, ringing voice of large-hearted Sir Walter Scott:—

“He was a man of middle age,
 With aspect comely, grave and sage,
 As on king’s errand come :
 But in the glances of his eye,
 A penetrating, keen, and sly
 Expression found its home ;
 The flash of that satiric rage,
 Which, bursting on the early stage,
 Branded the vices of the age,
 And broke the keys of Rome.

On milk-white palfrey forth he paced,
 His cap of maintenance was graced
 With the proud heron-plume.
 From his steed's shoulders, loin, and breast
 Silk housings swept the ground,
 With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
 Embroidered round and round!
 The double tressure might you see,
 First by Achaius borne,
 The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
 And gallant unicorn.

.
 Still is thy name in high account,
 And still thy verse has charms,
 Sir David Lindsay of the Mount,
 Lord Lion King-at-arms."

The "Lord Lion King-at-arms" was no way an anti-climax in the old days of which good Sir Walter's heart was full. In our period people laugh at these old forms and customs, and at that stately ceremonial, which, after all, however, was nothing but a symbol of a very actual and real life, and not such an ugly life either, behind it. Order among men, rank, loyalty, courtesies and observances founded upon these,—all were typified by the figure on the palfrey, the appearance of which I, for one, am superstitious enough to admire. It was doubtless a great honour to David Lindsay of the Mount to have the situation. Davie (as the Scotch

call him) was the son of Lindsay of the Mount, in Fifeshire, a branch of the great house of Lindsay of the Byres, and born in 1490. Let me refer you, for a genial and warm-hearted memoir of him (by one who is his kinsman in blood and in genius), to the *Lives of the Lindsays*, by the present heir to the chiefship of that ancient family.

Some vestige of the habitation at the Mount is, I believe, still visible in that undulating and hilly country of Fife, if only as a stone patch in a farmhouse. They point out a couple of trees there, which bear Sir David's name; and a generation ago they picked up a stone carved with his shield:—all very characteristic of a country of which every acre has its tradition.

The Mount, I fancy (though it sounds immensely territorial), was not a very remunerative possession: so Davie would be glad, no doubt, to get a place under the James's. He was a young fellow of about twenty-three, when James IV. of that name—the gay and brilliant James—a true Stuart in his good and bad qualities, left Holyrood, and advanced southward, towards the place well known to all Scotchmen as Flodden Field, where, with a swarm of nobles and gentlemen, heads of families, surrounded by a ring of the oldest nobility in Europe, he perished in the thick of the fight. David Lindsay became the tutor, the nurse, almost the father of

James V. He played the lute to the youngster in old Holyrood Palace, and told him stories (in the feudal garb which all stories then wore, when Japhet was spoken of as a "gentleman," and the Virgin Mary was esteemed to have been a princess of coat-armour,) about Hector, and Arthur, and Julius, and Troy, and Thebes. Lindsay was an accomplished man, heedful of both ancient and modern lore; humorous, stately; somewhat pedantic, but not ungracefully so; and from his birth and education not so merely classical as the Erasmuses and others of the time, but imbued with the spirit of the feudal world, and of the social life, in which he took a great part. It was curious, and an instance of the compensating way in which Nature manages matters, that while Erasmus and others, born in the inferior ranks of life, wrote habitually in the learned tongue, imitating the tone of Horace, the tone of Lucian, and so on,—Sir David, the courtier, the noble, and the Lion King, studied Chaucer; and when he began to write, wrote in the language of the common people, and continued a popular darling long after the folios of Erasmus were tranquil on their shelves.

I should like to describe Sir David Lindsay as being a genuine Scotchman; but I am afraid of being misapprehended. What is the English notion of the Scotch character? The common idea, that the Scotchman is a cold, hard, shrewd, calculating fel-

low, somewhat mean, is comparatively modern, and I am afraid I must add, vulgar. In the times we are treating of to-night, it was for their fiery, genial, proud character, that the Scotch were famous in Europe. When Erasmus, in the *Encomium Moricæ*, is attacking national pride, the Italians for thinking themselves the only civilised people, and so on,—he quizzes the Scotch for their pride of birth and their love of argument. The meaner imputations are of later date, and were provoked by adventurers, who came over here from James the First to Bute's times, and who were by no means the best specimens of their nation. It is a little too bad, that a country with the most romantic of all histories, the most devoted of all martyrs, the most enthusiastic of all loyalists, and the most copious of all writers of high fiction, should be talked of as if it only produced men fit to shine in the retail-trade!¹

That the Scotch are a very sensible people at bottom, I am prepared to admit. But this solid substance is likewise impregnated with fire, with humour; and good Sir David is a fine specimen of the

¹ See a note to Mackintosh's Dissertation in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where the same peculiarities attributed by Erasmus are imputed to them on ancient authority. The phrase "*Scotorum præfervida ingenia*," in fact, expresses the general opinion about the Scotch; it will be found in Buchanan's *Rer. Scot. Hist.* lib. 16. "*Les Escossois sont bons philosophes*," observes Joseph Scaliger. (*Scaligeriana*.)

mixture. He had been Lion King, ambassador to the Netherlands, and was well acquainted with the great world (which was then still splendid all over with chivalrous usages, feudal pomp, heraldry, and all the other blossoming-out of the mediæval life), before he began his career of author. But he was a born satirist; he had not been reading and observing in vain; and the sixteenth century had great events on hand. Fate found a Lion King-at-arms,—a functionary, the very soul, one would think, of order, indeed the marshaller and disposer of the symbolism of order,—to co-operate with the purest reform. Light flowed through his atmosphere of azure and gules, and came out pure, luminous, and tinted only with beauty in its passage.

Sir David employed his poetic talent in complimentary court-verses; but this was only a small portion of his work. When Magdalen of France, James the Fifth's young bride, died, he made an elegant and a sincere little poem on the event. But trifles like this would only have proved him an accomplished gentleman. He is remembered, and has been influential in the world; and I am speaking of him to you now, because his humorous heart and his quick eye prompted him to make various satirical onslaughts on the abuses of his time, and especially on the abuses of the Church. As Erasmus preceded

Luther, so Sir David Lindsay preceded Knox. He made striking assaults on the ecclesiastical system, which undoubtedly tended to its overthrow; and there was this further resemblance, that when the reforming action began in Scotland, Sir David did not join practically. He lived in retirement, and kept aloof: he was good of his kind; but there he stopped. He was the worldly, easy-going man, too, in his way; and retired to the Mount, doubtless thinking in this fashion: "I have lashed the rogues for what I saw bad about them; and now let them take care of themselves, and go—where they like in their own way." Our business is not to say that Lindsay was inferior to Knox, but modestly to suggest, that it would be well for us all if we were as good as Lindsay.

In every case where a system has fallen into corruption, there is doubtless some one particular outward result of it which represents to the popular mind the whole of its falsity. Thus, at the Reformation, special doctrines would scarcely so much shock the people as to make them stir against the system in which they and their fathers had been born and bred. There needed some practical everyday evil; and this was found in the conduct of the clergy. Scotland was more completely, perhaps, under the domination of priests than any country

in Europe. They had about half the land, according to some calculations.¹ A nobleman was glad to marry a bishop's daughter, and taint his whole pedigree with the scandal. How tremendous the revolt was, one can judge from the beautiful ruins, scattered over Scotland, of grand old abbeys, with their broken arches, where the garden-walls are traceable for hundreds of yards about. You approach the spot through a road overshadowed with lime-trees; and the probability is, that you return (particularly if you have the honour of claiming kin with an abbot or two in the old list of them) in a high state of sentimental melancholy. Some people base a whole system of politics on no better foundation than this lugubrious emotion, and curse the Scottish Reformation during the whole of dinner-time. I hope I am not a barbarian; but even such spectacles as these ruins do not induce me to depreciate the worth of Knox, or any body who co-operated with him.

Sir David Lindsay's poems, being written in the common colloquial language of his day for the most part, are of course somewhat obsolete. But a very little trouble bestowed, with the aid of such an edition as that of George Chalmers² (an antiquarian of

¹ Robertson.

² "Works of Sir David Lyndesay." Chalmers was also the author of the valuable *Caledonia*, of a *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, a *Life of Ruddiman*, and other learned works. But he will say no more good of a Knox or a Buchanan than he can help!

the last generation, to whom all Scotchmen specially, and the world at large, are under high obligations), enables you to see what humour and shrewdness, and manly love of justice (though the utterance often enough is homely and coarse), belong to his character. There is "Kittie's Confession," a queer little poem :

“ The Curat Kittie would confess,
 And she told on both more and less ;
 When she was talking as she wist,
 The Curat Kittie would have kissed.
 But yet a countenance he bure,
 Digest, debate, daign, and demure.
 Said he, ‘ Have you any wrongous gear ?’
 Said she, ‘ I stole a peck of bear ;’
 Said he, ‘ That should restorèd be,
 Therefor deliver it to me !”

Kittie gives an account of the kind of men who confessed her, saying,—

“ And meikle Latin he did mumble ;
 I heard nothing but humble-bumble ;”

and so on. But Sir David's longest satirical work is in the dramatic form (one of the very earliest forms Satire assumed), and is entitled *The Satire of the Three Estates*. He thought he would take advantage of a form of exhibition already used in the *Moralities*; and accordingly he produced a long play,

full of allegorical personages,—King Humanity, Solace, Verity, Spiritualitie (who represents the Church), John Common-Weal, the Pardoner, and various others,—who move about and talk away in flowing rhyme; though the work, I fear, would be described by a modern theatrical critic as “totally deficient in construction, and without plot.” It gives me a high opinion of the brave endurance of our ancestors, when I remember that they sat out the nine hours necessary to the performance of this dramatic work. A simple, earnest people, not *blasé* and pampered with pleasantries like us; for there, in the year 1536, also in the succeeding years, at Linlithgow, Cupar, and near Edinburgh, they assembled in crowds to hear it. In 1539, James the Fifth, with his second wife, Mary of Lorraine, and hordes of the magnates, were present at it,—an immense crowd, swarming in the open air, where it went on. The first person prays the “gude pepile” that every man will keep still his “ane tongue,” and every woman her “two.” Sir David loved to have a satiric slap at the women: he married a “Janet Douglas” (Chalmers confesses, with a suppressed tear, that he does not know from what branch of the Douglasses); and it may be conjectured that he practised his satirical weapon upon the shoulders of that lady, as they are said not to have been happy. Throughout the drama the Church has many a rub.

The Pardoner comes in, wanting to sell relics :

“ The tail-part of St. Bryde’s cow,
 The snout of old St. Anthony’s sow,
 Whilk bore his holy bell.
 Wha ever be heires this bell clink,
 Gif me one ducat for till drink,
 He sall never gang to hell.”

Of course, the domestic relation of the priesthood is not omitted, though it must be by us. But while all the common topics, their suppressing the Bible, and the rest of it, are well handled, one of the *personæ*, Pauper, is made to complain of his treatment in the Consistory Court in a way which may claim not our faint and distant, but our warm sympathy and condolence. He states his case :

“ I lent my gossip my mare to fetch home coals,
 And he her drowned in the quarry holes.”

Pauper brought his action, as we should say. “ And I ran to the Consistory :”

“ They gave me, first, ane thing they call *citandum* ;
 Within aucht days I got but *lybellandum* ;
 Within ane month I got *ad opponendum* ;
 In half an year I got *inter loquendum* ;
 And syne I gat—how call ye it?—*ad replicandum* ;
 But I could never one word understand him :
 And then they gart me cast out mony plackis,
 And gart me pay for four-and-twenty actis.

But ere they came half-way to *concludendum*,
The feind ane plack was left for to defend him.
Thus they postponed me twa year."

And he concludes :

"Of *pronunciandum* they made me wondrous fain;
But I got never my guid grey mare again!"

The Pardoner complains that nobody now believes
in him

"That reads the New Testament ;"

and expresses his wish—

"That Martin Luther, that false loun,
Black Bullinger, and Melancthon,
Had been smothered in their cude,"

viz. the face-cloth worn at baptism. Counsell takes
Spiritualitie to task, and says,—

"Ane bishop's office is to be ane preacher,
And of the law of God ane public teacher."

Spiritualitie has never heard of such a thing; and,
on being rather rudely referred to "what St. Paul
writes to Timothie;" "for," says Counsell,—

"Take there the book; let's see if ye can spell—"

Spiritualitie answers,—

"I never read that; therfor read it yoursell!"

All editors have wondered at such satire being

allowed; but such was the case. For many generations Sir David exercised an immense influence over the people of Scotland; and whenever any new "word" was attempted to be introduced, "Ye'll no find that in Davie Lindsay," was the conclusive expression, which testified to the Lion King's social authority. He deserves honourable remembrance among the great men of his land.

George Buchanan must not now occupy us long. His fame was gained by his scholastic attainments chiefly, and the wonderful way in which he knew how to put on the ancient armour, and use the native strength and brilliancy of his intellect in that panoply. But he, too, drew a sharp pen in the cause of the Reformation, and suffered also in that cause. He was as famous a man of letters as any in Europe in his day. But now, as Father Prout has truly remarked,¹ his countrymen show their regard for him rather by glorying in the reputation he acquired than by reading his works. The last edition of him was the folio one of Ruddiman, published at Edinburgh in 1715. He is the shadow of a great name.

Buchanan was of a family "more ancient than opulent," as the Lives remark; and was born in

¹ *Prout Papers*, reprinted from *Fraser's Magazine*.

1506.¹ His youth was passed in poverty, in studying at St. Andrew's, in studying at Paris, where he taught grammar. Young Gilbert Kennedy, son of the Earl of Cassilis, took him as tutor; and with him he came back to Scotland, and enjoyed hospitality and leisure at the great seat of the Kennedies, in the south. Kennedy, his kind patron, died; and Buchanan came about the court of James the Fifth, and taught a natural son of that king's, who was in training to be an abbot.² James having had a quarrel with the Franciscans, asked Buchanan to write a poem against them; and as his first sketch was not strong enough (for, in fact, George did not wish to provoke them), called for another and stronger dose. Buchanan *did* make it hot and strong this time. He was already suspected of new views; the Franciscans stormed; James suffered him to go to prison after all; but he escaped, and got to England. He found Henry the Eighth persecuting all sides there; so went to Paris again. From Paris he went to Bor-

¹ *Georgii Buchanani Vita*,—*Op.* vol. i. Chalmers (in his *Life of Ruddiman*) doubts whether Buchanan wrote this "Life" himself, as was commonly believed. There is a little book about the Buchanans, by W. Buchanan (published at Glasgow). Buchanan was a son of Buchanan of Moss, and nearly related to the head of his clan. The estate of "Buchanan" now belongs to the Duke of Montrose.

² The common provision for such youngsters!—Erasmus taught a natural son of James the Fourth's, who was killed afterwards, with his father, at Flodden.

deaux; and, there seems good reason to believe, about this time had a share in the honour of educating Montaigne. The plague drove him from Bordeaux; and when he went to Portugal, the Inquisition imprisoned him.—Stormy times these for the literary man! Shut up in a monastery, where the monks were ignorant, but rather civil than otherwise, he occupied himself in turning the Psalms into Latin. He was again in England—again in Paris; and there Queen Mary made him her teacher; and when she came to Scotland, in 1561, George daily read Livy with her in the palace of Holyrood. He is spoken of as “Mr. George Buchanan,”—sometimes as the “godly,” always as the “learned Mr. George.” As far as the general impression we derive of him goes, he must have been rather a grim man: how he flogged young Jamie, afterwards King James VI., whose preceptor he was, is well known; and probably survives as a terrible tradition among the many royal descendants of that king. James was in no humour, I imagine, for perching himself on the chair of state after he had bungled over a passage in Virgil to Master Buchanan. His Satires, the *Franciscanus*, and a collection of epigrams called the *Fratres Fraterrimi*, are full of scorn and wit. His was a more passionate and a darker tinge of character than that of Erasmus.¹

¹ We have a paragraph about him in the curious *Memoirs* of his contemporary Sir James Melvil. “Mr. George Buchanan was

All that continental experience, poverty, persecution by rascals and blockheads, the dreary dependence of a long-descended gentleman, and a high-aspiring scholar and genius, on people who were sometimes neither, acting probably on a nature having a tendency to be what the Scotch call "dour," must have contributed to make Buchanan grim. He very heartily joined the Reformers; and he has had plenty of abuse from the high-flying historical Mariolaters. There is nothing about him to attract the effeminate sentimentalists; and when they lay their servile paws upon his laurels, they excite unutterable scorn. They make a great fuss about his ingratitude, because, having had a pension from Queen Mary, he joined and acted with the party against her. Let us, for an instant, forget her fine eyes and her musical amateurship, and look at this case with the feelings of men. The first scholar in the kingdom gets certain crowns for work done to the queen and to the state; he is therefore bound never to assert his manhood against the giver, on behalf of his religion and his country, while believing her guilty in the eyes of God and man. Only a person very far gone in *plush* indeed would stretch his loyalty to *this* length.

In his latter years, George Buchanan held such

a stoick philosopher, who looked not far before him; a man of notable endowments. He was also religious; but was easily abused."

positions in the state as his intellect entitled him to. He was Principal of St. Andrew's; and there, near the black and huge relics of the enormous abbey, in that queer, quaint little town, where every thing tells of the death of old days, and the Northern Sea, on which it stands, comes lashing up against the walls of hollow ruined castles,—there they show you where the famous man lived. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1567; and it would be difficult to say what more honourable position a man of letters could have filled at that time in Europe. In his old age he occupied himself in writing his History of Scotland in Latin. He invariably employed that language, except once in a prose Satire on Maitland of Lethington, which contrasts strangely, in its Scotch quaintness, with the flowing and pointed style of his classical periods.¹

There are some stories about his dying profanely, and crying out from Propertius about Cynthia, on his death-bed; which may be seen quoted in Bayle, where the unfortunate liar who propounded them exists, like a snake in spirits in a museum, for the observation of those who are curious in snakes.²

¹ This Satire is called the *Chamaleon*, and begins—"Thair is a certane kynd of beist callit Chamaleon, engenderit in sic countreis as the sone hes mair strength in than in this Yle of Brettane, the quhilk albeit it be small of corporance, nogtheless it is of ane strange nature, the quhilk makis it to be na less celebrat and spoken of than sum beastis of greittar quantitie." (*Op.* end of vol. i.)

² Bayle, art. *Buchanan*, Note D. "Father Garasse" was the writer

But as he and his lies have gone to their common parent, we need not waste time on them. Flashes of grimness and humour, which characterised the manly, sturdy nature of Buchanan, are found in more credible accounts of his last days. One writer says, that he was summoned, for certain passages in his History, to "compear" before the Council; and that he sent back word, that he was "going to compear before an higher Judge." It is narrated, also, that learning that he had just enough money to bury him, he directed it "to be given to the poor; for the City would have to bury him at its own expense." The city was Edinburgh, in which he died, in 1582, aged 76 years.¹ He was buried in the Greyfriars' churchyard there;—but though you find plenty of Mac-thises and Mac-thats of that ilk handsomely entombed, you do not find the grave of Buchanan. Indeed, at some alteration of the alluded to. The confidence of the Presbyterian party is a sufficient proof of Buchanan's piety; dozens of great names might be quoted to prove his fame; his works exist to establish his genius,—but sealed up from popular perusal in the Latin tongue. I may note here (what does not seem generally known), that the venerable head on the cover of *Blackwood's Magazine* is the head of Buchanan.

¹ There are some letters (in Latin and French) to and from Buchanan, in the edition of Ruddiman. There is one from Beza, in 1580, in which he says, "May the Lord Jesus bless your gray hairs more and more!"—I recommend this to the attention of Miss Strickland, who, in her eagerness to whiten Mary, finds it necessary to blacken Buchanan, and does it with gusto.

boundaries of that ground, both Knox's and Buchanan's remains took their chance, with those of others, of getting a final settlement in what is now the space about the law-courts. "He was wont," says an old writer, "to despise pompous monuments."

His Satire is of the contemptuous order. He was one of those satirists who do not profess to tickle, nor pretend to that happy temperament which makes a man, with a smiling good-natured face and a perfectly-balanced system, smile while he strikes, and wound without an imputation on his good-nature; or write an epitaph or a libel with the same impartiality, and similar ease and skill. I fancy Buchanan was, for the most part, very impassioned and serious in the satirical work he took in hand. Waving the question of art, which would of course deal with productions on a different principle, I confess I would rather have as a friend, and specially as an ally; the man who on the surface looks the more ferocious and bloodthirsty of the two. Of Erasmus's good nature and general friendliness I have the highest opinion; but I think it likely that Buchanan had the deeper heart, and generally the deeper moral nature. Sir David Lindsay occupies a position between them; and is to be considered a warm-hearted, truth-loving gentleman, who took up Satire half as an amateur, but produced an

effect with it that makes us honour his memory long after the Mount has vanished from his kindred; in days when the brave and beautiful symbols on his armorial coat look dim and old-fashioned, and when even his gentile name of Lindsay must owe its chief honour to the merits of those who bear it.

For many ages, every man of any gifts naturally looked to the Church as the field for his employment. But during the period over which these men's lives extended, a new element came into European affairs, in the classical literature, with all the ideas it brought with it, of which the man of letters was naturally the exponent. He thus became super-added as a teacher to the existing staff of the instructors of mankind; and as poet, moralist, satirist, and in other capacities, was the rival, and, as it soon proved, the natural opponent of the priest. Europe has never been without this element, this truly liberal element. Satirists were found three hundred years before Erasmus's time, in the authors of those Latin rhyming-poems, of whom Walter Mapes stands as the representative; and the minstrel, and even the household fool (who has yet to be investigated, and perhaps has never been thoroughly appreciated), were all parts of it,—parts, that is, of the representation of the thoughts and passions of mankind, of which the priest was in large measure the regulator. Not

a minstrel, not a satirist, not a fool, perhaps, but contributed something towards the ripening of that revolt which made its first great triumph in the times I have been speaking of; and which now walks the world, with many names, hundred-eyed and hundred-handed, "conquering and to conquer." The body of men who succeeded to Erasmus and Buchanan followed up their work. The literary man was the embodiment of minstrel, reformer, and satirist, and superseded these; and (if only as a new guise, sometimes, of the household fool) is to be traced henceforth as a highly important agent in the affairs of Europe.

EARLY EUROPEAN SATIRE.—BOILEAU,
BUTLER, DRYDEN.

LECTURE III.

EARLY SATIRE.—BOILEAU, BUTLER, DRYDEN.

BEFORE the end of the seventeenth century, Satire had assumed in Europe a polished and developed form; had derived from the ancient literature whatever was necessary to it; and had reached, in point of language and finish, a completeness and correctness beyond which it has not made any marked advance. In the famous Boileau, and in the famous Dryden, whose work belongs to the latter half of that seventeenth century, we have the Satire proper (in its form of a satiric poem, and much indebted to Horace and Juvenal);—we have it, I say, in full ripeness and perfection. Each of these men is among moderns a classic; each remains a finished and developed specimen of his class; and the lapse of time and the progress of culture have not enabled us to give to their forms any further force or finish.

But, as I intimated to you in my last Lecture, Europe can never have been said to have been without this satirical element. In turning our eyes to

the dawn of intellectual light, we see, among the streaks of colour, a light brilliant play on the horizon, of humorous radiance, indicating that our friend the Satirist is alive and awake, like his neighbours. The writers on northern antiquities tell us, that away in the icy North, in old days, the Scandinavians had their "Nithing verses,"¹ rhymed rude compositions, which, in those fighting times, were their intellectual weapons. And in England here, as early as 1197, in which year Walter Mapes was made Archdeacon of Oxford, there existed, ay, in the days of the earliest Plantagenets, and when Heraldry itself was young, a school of satirists. It has been the fortune of that Walter Map, for such was his name (he was a Welshman by birth, and every body admired his abundant jocosity), to give his name to the compositions of, and to stand himself as the traditional type of, this school. The Camden Society have elegantly printed the poems attributed to Walter Mapes,² comprising that one, of course,

¹ Blackwell's edition of Mallet, p. 302.

² The Latin poems attributed to Walter Mapes, collected and edited by Thomas Wright, Esq., F.S.A. Printed for the Camden Society. 1841.—The publication of a collection so curious as this, is a benefit to the literary world. It may be mentioned, as a proof how much modern satire has at all times owed to those ancients with whom I began, that the authors of these poems were evidently familiar with Juvenal. See the "Contra ambitiosos et avaros" at p. 152.

from which came the drinking-song, translated by Leigh Hunt, wherein the writer expresses a wish

“To end his days in a tavern drinking,”

and a hope that the angels who come for his soul will exclaim—

“The Lord be merciful to a man of this gentleman’s way of thinking.”

The learned editor, Wright, says, that there is no evidence that Mapes was such an inordinate toper. This is so far satisfactory! But that the school were not indifferent to joviality as a principle is clear from their tone of composition. They write in the same kind of rhyming Latin doggerel; they are most humorous on the peccadilloes of the clergy and the monastic orders; and, in a word, they were the representatives of the humorous and satirical element in those distant days, when the man of letters proper was unknown.

Now this element, of course, will embody itself in every period. In those days there was no organisation for it; society consisted, according to an old poem, of three great distinctions of men—

“Clerc, chevalier, ouvrier de terre.”

The fighting-man found work enough; the religious, and generally the studious man, had the Church; but the humorous and intellectual man, though he

sometimes became an ecclesiastic with a jovial reputation, had to take a course of his own. Such men as the writers of the Mapes' Poems formed a class called *goliards*, *goliardi*, a kind of scholarly wags or buffoons—poor scholars—satirical fellows, who lashed the monks, and were rather men of the world than members of its great institutions. There was an old statute forbidding the clerical order to be jokers, goliards, or buffoons. I fear that in those days the satirist was not a dignified character. The humbler satirist and wag was a professed buffoon; and he represented the comic element, for many generations, in the capacity of Fool. I have said before, that that figure deserves some investigation:—who and what could these men have been who lived in this world on that footing? Was he tinctured with insanity; and did he derive his intellectual light from what we popularly call a crack in his skull? Shakespeare has drawn him, and so as to make him a prominent personage. Holbein has painted him as a part of the family group of one of the greatest and wisest men of his time. Surely there must have been some amusing quality about Harry Patenson, if he could interest the leisure of such a man as Sir Thomas More? It is a difficult subject; but it seems only too clear that the poor Fool's position was a very dubious and questionable one: he went loose about the court-yard of the castle like a pet hound, and

was summoned when he was wanted. He might say truth now and then; but he had to invest it in some such form that it looked as if he had tumbled on it by accident: and he cannot have seriously set up for a wise man, or he would have interfered too much. It was Humour in livery; Satire going about in a mean form, like an Oriental prince under enchantment. From the names of fools, it seems pretty certain that they were of the lower orders. I suppose, that when a wag was born on one of a baron's manors, the news came in time to the château,—where, you may be sure, the old existing official said that the young beginner was an over-rated fool, and had no real talent as a wag. However, this species of *reviewing* could not be long successful. Lady Mabel would hear of the younker's merry conceits.—In brief, here was a kind of career, at all events, for many a poor fellow born naturally a small wag: while he behaved himself, all went well; and if he misbehaved himself, he was whipped.

However, this is an inquiry more curious than important. To resume our remarks more seriously. The goliards, then, were the satirists of their day, and their Latin rhymes have real spirit and humour, and even elegance. They attacked monks, mendicants, loose-living ecclesiastics; and were among the best-educated men of their time. Their Satire, however playful its form, was a "protest," as all

good Satire is, in the cause of truth. Not a seed fell from the blossoms of their satirical nettle but helped to produce hundreds of future nettles, by the aid of which many foul figures got stung and whipped out of England.

Contemporary with the early religious reformers was the author of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, which dates about 1362. My space makes me only briefly indicate this satirical allegory, wherein the author, Langland, satirises the Church-abuses. In all ways this is an antique composition; and all that a general reader can make of it is to recognise, by the help of antiquaries, that here was a fine vigorous shrewd satirist. Compared with him, Chaucer's style is modern. Chaucer's own satire is lively and picturesque; but as it is only incidental, and Chaucer was mainly a poet, he does not fall within my plan. Through every age Satire lived in one form or another; and in those early times the Church, with its huge ramifications, was its great object.

An early English satirist, who is still readable and amusing, at least in part, is Skelton¹—Laureate Skelton—who flourished in the reign of Henry VIII. He was a parson, some time rector of Diss, in Nor-

¹ Skelton was laureated at Oxford about 1489. He was patronised by Henry Algernon Percy, fifth Earl of Northumberland. (Warton.)

folk, and came of a Cumberland family. His satire is generally written in very short flowing rhymes, comic helter-skelter doggrel; in fact—with a rattle like that of a rattle-snake's in it. He was one of your wild, reckless satirists, who, if powder runs short, will fling stones; and if stones are deficient, do not stick at mud. You will find his quaint and remarkable productions among the English poets in the large collections, where the strip of type of his short lines flows down the page like a thin rivulet,—only somewhat impure at times. People have tried to make the best of old Skelton. They say that the age was in fault: and truly, Erasmus and More, and also Luther, went greater lengths in speech and illustration than their peers dream of doing now. But I am afraid that Warton speaks the truth when he says, that “Skelton would have been a writer without decorum at any period.”¹ However, we cannot all be decorous, I suppose: and it is possible for a man to be somewhat indecorous, and yet quite as honest and worthy as his neighbours. Skelton doubtless believed in mud; and thought a dead cat a natural object to throw at the man he hated. Of him, and others, we may say, not that they had worse hearts than we have, but that their olfactory organs were coarser. Having made this reservation, I may say that I admire old Skelton, and think him

¹ Warton, *History of Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 341.

worthy of mention among our grim old natural satirists. He was a good scholar, and known to be a strong man; and Erasmus has spoken with admiration of him. He makes contortions like a buffoon, but you admire his sinews; and he has a ferocious temper, but with gleams of good-nature and heartiness.

Skelton raises a tremendous howl of joy and scorn on the occasion of Flodden Field, and taunts the "proud Scots" with having lost their king there, whom he calls "Jemmy," "Jemmy the Scot:" and if you can fancy a strong man tumbling head-over-heels, and intoxicated with the smell of blood, dancing till his fool's-bells ring again with joy, you can fancy Skelton on this occasion. There is a similar spirit in his attack on Wolsey, in the poem called *Why come ye not to Court?* Here is rattling, galloping, fiery doggrel,—the fire smoky enough,—for Skelton is like those ecclesiastics who burned their victims with green wood. He has no mercy on Wolsey; and Wolsey, of course, was to a contemporary satirist not the dignified figure he is to us, but an over-gorged favourite and a bloated parvenu. Skelton taunts the nobles with their subserviency to the Cardinal. Says he—

"They dare not look out of a dure,
For dread of the mastiff' cur;
For dread of the butcher's deg
Would worry them like a hog!"

And he speaks of his

“base progeny,
And his greasy genealogy.”

For the birth of the Cardinal was a capital subject, of course. Satirists are impartial men in this way: they will lash a noble for being proud of his birth, and another man for having no birth at all. Yet, till the end of the world, a man from the lower class, who affects the pride and adopts the vices of the great, will be fair game for the satirical writer.

However, the Cardinal was too strong for Skelton, who had to fly from his vengeance to sanctuary at Westminster,—where he could meditate on his own superiority to him, as a descendant of the Skeltons of Cumberland, at his leisure,—and where he died, in 1529. The antiquaries have paid “beastly Skelton,” as Pope calls him, a due share of attention. And, indeed, as an original and gifted man, as one who wrote under the old English influences at a very early period, and when the leading men in Europe were almost more Latin than modern, he will remain in remembrance as a curious writer.

We now approach the time when the study of the classic literature became the predominant feature; and we shall find the most famous satirists reflecting the Horatian and Juvenalian influence, not only in spirit, but in form. Those who may be

called the formal satirists are my principal subjects; but men of note, whose influence on the world was achieved by satire, I cannot pass by.

Bishop Hall was the great opener of our classic and formal satire, *i. e.* a special satirical poem, in the heroic metre. He was born in 1574, and published his first Satires before that century was out. His satiric teacher was Juvenal; and in what I have read of his Satires, I cannot but respect him as a father of the satirical church. He is grave, shrewd, and stately; and though his verse is rude, he has fine lines.¹ Donne,² though he wrote later, is less musical in his Satires than Bishop Hall. His is, too, a character of which we know more, and which, by those who have read Izaak Walton's *Lives*, will always be held in gracious remembrance. Donne's mind was like some costly, dark-hued, solemn church-garment, embroidered with flowers, and with threads of brilliant wit woven into it. The surface is brilliant; but the whole awes you, and the effect is saintly. When one of these pure and high characters writes satires, I am bound to say the effect

¹ See *Satires* by Bishop Hall, with illustrations by Warton, and notes by Singer. Chiswick, 1824. His autobiographic sketch is very interesting. "What I have done," he says, "is worthy of nothing but silence and forgetfulness; but what God hath done for me is worthy of everlasting and thankful memory." The Satires were the work of his youth. He died Sept. 8th, 1656, ætat. 82.

² Born 1573, died 1631.

is somewhat disturbing. Do you remember, in Parnell's *Hermit* (which, to my mind, is a charming poem), how the figure, who has surprised the holy man by his conduct, suddenly becomes an angel? You have an effect like that produced on you when you come from Donne's *Satires* to read of Donne's *Life*: you wonder that he can have condescended to laugh at the pertness of a young attorney, or a new-beneficed divine. It is as if he were using an aureole to burn a booby's fingers. He is one of the first wits who have ever appeared in England, and as holy as witty. Wit was no flaw on his sacredness; he was a large-hearted man, and wit was an ornament to the beauty of his character, as pearls are to the beauty of a girl. Pope's modernisation of his *Satires* is ingenious; but the *Satires* themselves (though antiquated in form, and though they look odd and quaint, as old oak furniture does) are worthy of his honourable name.

I now proceed to speak of Dryden's contemporary, Boileau,—a writer whose name cannot be omitted in any list of modern satirists, whatever our opinion may be of his general renown as a poet, and the importance of his authority in literature. He ranks among the refiners and formers of the French language, one of the great ornaments of the reign of Louis XIV., and generally passed, from his own day to that of Chateaubriand, as a potentate

and senator in their literature: a dignified classic figure, supposed to be the model of fine taste; and when the new school began (as there began, and will have to begin yet, new schools all over Europe, in literature), the classical party set up, amongst others, Boileau's image, calm and majestic, to receive the barbarians, like the old Roman senators sitting in their curule chairs. He is, or was, the "great Monsieur Boileau," the "famous M. Boileau," one of the fathers of French literature, and household gods of the Academy;—though, by the way (which shows how eminent a writer he was in his own time), he did not get into the Academy till the king gave them a pretty strong hint on the subject.

Nicholas Boileau Despréaux was born in 1636, of a family that produced one or two notable men, and had a good social position. He tried the bar; and, like other men, made one or two trials before he hit on his vocation, which clearly was literature. He devoted himself instinctively to Satire; and in 1666 published some Satires with great success. There had been famous Satires before, enjoying vogue in Paris; but none written with such elegance, such harmony, such gaiety. Naturally, the man who improves a language obtains peculiar honour, and blends his personal fame with the fame of his country. It is not wonderful, then, that our satirist acquired a reputation, of which the

main characteristic was its extreme respectability. The great king took notice of him, and permitted him to visit him, and to offer him incense;—for the great king had a taste in the matter of incense, as in all matters which ministered to personal gratification. He did not like coarse perfumes on *his* altars: Boileau knew that well; and his sacrifices were of the choicest character. The king made him a historiographer; and Boileau attended him on one of his campaigns, in order to see what greatness was in action. “*Grand roi,*” he exclaims, “cease to conquer, or I cease to write.” You would think he was rapt into a frenzy of admiration; but he has his eye on the god, in the midst of it, to see how he likes it. “You know,” says he, “that my style *est né pour la Satire.*” He had no talent for praise. No, no. His praise was extorted from him by sheer greatness. This is the most artful flattery, which disclaims the possibility of being able to flatter.

It was a part of the stupendous system of worship which attended Louis Quatorze. Birth, and rank, and beauty, and wit, were all offered up to him, to be enjoyed, and begged permission to adore him. He was Augustus. He was the ruler of kings. The narrative of the ceremony of his dressing himself in the morning is as long as the Gospel of St. John. No wonder that a man of letters (particularly one

who called himself a poet, and was supposed to possess such emotions as reverence) should add *his* homage; should use his intellect as a kind of pastille to gratify the nostrils of the great man. Boileau possessed a good position, then, both for what he did worthily and for what was less excellent. And he used it well, we must say. He praised and gave his support to Molière,—a man of far more remarkable genius; he loved and praised Racine. He did not go much to the court in later days; and said he could be of little use now that there was nobody to praise. We must remember all this; and also that he was a kindly man to his friends, and the rest of it. He wanted not these good qualities; which may be conceded, without conceding that he was of the highest order of character; just as we can concede great literary merit to him, without admitting him to any such rank as has been claimed for him by his admirers.

I suppose that we need not now argue the question, whether he was a poet or not.¹ Different qualities are now considered needful to that character from those which constitute the writings of Boileau.

¹ Keats's "one Boileau," which so shocked the seniors of his generation, does not seem half so audacious to us now. Those who reverence the name of Boileau for its "classical" authority, may see in Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* ("The Abbé Dëlille and Walter Landor") what a low opinion is entertained of him by a man of genius, who well knows the truly "classical" works of the world.

His *Ode on the taking of Namur* exists as a specimen of what he could do in the way of odes. It is extremely inferior to the famous *Alexander's Feast* of Dryden, which, with all its merit (and I love Dryden), is not comparable as poetry to the lyrics of Shelley and Keats. The winds are called on to be silent, for "Je vais parler de Louis!" He is animated by Phœbus with transports "les plus doux." But there is another ode,—against the English,—written in his youth, and which, I may add, ought not to have been published in his age. He calls on France to "arm," and crush the rebels against Charles; to crush these "bloody enemies of laws." This ode is a curiosity, however. Boileau did not think, that by contributing to the despotism of Louis, he was helping to produce a far worse revolt than that against Charles,—a revolt wherein Louis's descendants suffered far more than the Stuarts.

Boileau's Satires are very pleasant reading; and were, long ago, among my earliest studies in the satirical department. He says, in an epitaph which he wrote for himself, that he was "original even in imitation;" and that he had striven to unite in himself "Horace, Persius, and Juvenal." And this is so far true, certainly, that he fuses all that he gathers from the old satirists into a light and lively mixture, which has its own flavour and its own spirit and taste.

Whatever he owes to any body, he is yet in a position of his own, as a brilliant French writer, who reflects his epoch.

To place a man in his proper rank among his brother satirists, we must first determine and state his point of view, his moral ground; and next, his special literary talent. Boileau is a satirist of society, and a brilliant wit, rather than a satirical reformer or a deep-hearted humorist. The epigrams in his Satires are bright enough; but they gleam among commonplace and conventionalism, and on back-grounds of borrowed ethical reflection;—they are like little lamps, such as belong to Vauxhall, more than higher lights. Boileau was what is called a man of the world; and that at a period when the world was not a very noble one. Its philosophy is that of Rochefoucauld; the courts of Louis and of Charles II. are specimens of its morals; to Molière (a better, deeper-hearted man than Boileau) we owe its comic aspect. Boileau himself is a type of its sensible shrewd man, whose satire laughs at what is offensive to its taste and its largely-developed organ of common sense.

Lord Bacon remarks, that in all men “their fortune works upon their nature, and their nature upon their fortune.”¹ So, a man who is worldly in his life, will, for the most part, be worldly in his books.

¹ In his *History of Henry the Seventh.*

If he is so constituted that he *must* have great society and the smile of the *grand monarque*, he will see every thing from that point of view,—will love and hate, and praise and satirise, from that point of view. Conventionalism in sentiment will stamp itself on what he does; and I should as soon expect beautiful natural emotion from him (and therefore poetry as the expression of that), as I should expect to see the chamberlain's official stick break into blossoms!

Now, all high satire needs both sentiment and humour: feeling is the essential condition of both of these. They are both in Juvenal; and I should not have introduced Sir David Lindsay (even though I belong to Scotland, and love its history), if I had not seen quite clearly that the bottom of his character was huge natural sentiment, which made him love and sympathise,—which made him satirical when it was necessary for these qualities to fight against their opposites. Boileau, I think, as a character, was deficient in heartiness and spontaneity; and his laughter echoes the want. It is clear and fine, and it is not ungenial; but it is not warm and deep,—it is not passionate and tender.

What do we learn from him? Certainly a great many ingenious things, illustrative of the age in which he lived:—that it is a pity you should be a fool, if you want to be an author; that it is a pity you should write verses with a fatal deficiency of ear.

His own main fight in the world was against rival authors, in his attempt to establish a pure classical style in France; hence we never go very far without meeting cuts at Chapelain and the Abbé Cotin. These are the very best specimens of light ridicule to be met any where. Every body remembers that abbé by these attacks,—and very galling they must have been to a sensitive man; particularly as Boileau was so extremely felicitous in expression, that the jokes are the most portable in the world; as easy to consume and as light to carry as *bon-bons*. You know how easily a wit, or set of wits, can fix a name on a person or an institution. When Paris heard that every body naturally slept at the sermons of Cotin, the next effect was, that it became ridiculous to try and keep awake there. Society is very timid about sarcasm, as we know from all memoirs; and once a wit, every body is prepared to laugh with you. Boileau had plenty of enemies; but the world is always ready to be amused, which is achieved by a good laugh; while a serious vindication, which demands sympathy, threatens instantly to be a bore. When the world laughed with Boileau, it was not that its heart was touched,—his influence does not affect that region; it tickles your sense of the ridiculous, to be sure; but that, you must observe, is not a high feeling; that, I suppose, we all have; but we have it in common with the heartless and even with

the dull. To be able to laugh at something which touches our sense of the ridiculous is a very low stage in the development of the human nature: it is common to savages, to the ignorant and low among the population; and it is a faint participation in it which we see, or perhaps fancy we see, in the chattering of the ape. Without presuming to make decisions on those deep questions about the nature and conditions of humour, which employ the philosopher, I may venture to say, that it is the presence or absence of the heart-element which distinguishes high from low humour. This can be at once ascertained by applying the test to the humorists in literature,—by any one who analyses the laughter produced in him by Horace Walpole, and compares it with that which is excited by the family of the Shandies; by any one who contrasts the quiet, genial, humorous delight excited by the comedy of Lamb, with the pleasure produced in so many people by the works of Theodore Hook.

Boileau's amusement as a writer, which every body who takes up his Satires becomes sensible of, is produced by an appeal to your sense of the ridiculous, as a sensible and polished person. You laugh with him from the same instinct which would make you laugh, if the parson came into the pulpit of your church with his nightcap on, and proceeded, with solemn unconsciousness of the fact, to begin

the service. In proportion to your social feeling of his extreme respectability would your sense of the contrast be; and though you would not show it so much, you would feel it more acutely and vividly than honest Jack Gibbins the gardener, whose immediate sensation would rather be awe, and his reflection, a Lord a' mercy! that the poor gentleman should make such a figure of himself. Boileau, I mean to say, deals most in conventional ridicule. Hence he appeals as an author to the polished classes, and to the more worldly among them; and further, I fear, if he was not satirical, he would be nothing. When he discourses, he is often a bore; and if you view him apart from his exquisite faculty of expression, you admire him less and less.

It will serve to give us a just view of his true *status*, if we inquire into the degree of invention he possessed. He professes himself an imitator; and therefore in his general satires,—as, for instance, when he attacks false nobility—nobility without personal virtue (the subject of his fifth satire¹),—he takes up the whole view, the actual contrasts and *points* (to use a significant expression) of the Roman Satirists. Of course we know the talent required to make a modern application of the old Satires. But again, a bad effect of this is, that one is apt, on taking up a traditionary subject, because it stands

¹ As of Juvenal's admirable eighth.

among the satirical models, to lash away at evils which really do not call for lashing in our own day. Often enough you find in satirical literature, owing to unwise imitation, that "Catiline" and "Clodius" are applied to unhappy moderns, who, though bad enough in their way, are no riper for murder and sacrilege than the indignant satirist himself; who also, by the by, has no earnest conviction that Catiline and Clodius are; but simply intends to write a satire, and is himself a harmless, good-natured fellow, who lashes his leonine tail, not to work himself into a cruel anger, but only that you may admire the flexibility of the tail! I cannot help considering our friend Boileau Déspréaux one of the promoters of conventional satire generally; and thinking that in particular he might, if a great satirist, have found objects for satire, of which, as it was, he steered very clear.

However, when we remember that he had a right to choose what kind of satirist he would be; also that nature had helped to choose for him; that he had a right to base himself on the Classics, and to be ostentatiously servile to the *grand monarque* if he chose,—we must take good care to praise his real merit, and his execution of what he took in hand. His style is charming; he is clear, lively, and rapier-like in the extreme. His forte, to my mind, is epigram: he winds up a run of easy verses with nothing

particular in them, with some sharp turn of thought, which hits the object in the bull's eye, and sets the bell ringing. He is a capital man to quote, and one of those men who can be judged of from quotations. He is a cutting, but not a bitter or bloody satirist; and his blows, sharp, pungent, and annoying, have a good deal of the effect of a pea-shooter.

He exercised for generations an authority which, to many moderns, seems quite beyond what is justified by his genius or his character. He was of great literary weight in England in his day; and Tickell tells us, that the "famous M. Boileau formed his first opinion of the English genius for poetry from reading Mr. Addison's Latin poems." Poor M. Boileau! He must have departed from this world with strange notions about the English genius. John Milton had gone to his grave in the famous M. Boileau's own time; and there was not a "drawer," whose vocation in the time of M. Boileau's grandfather had been to bring in Canary in the Mermaid, who did not know more about English literature than this!

During this same century England produced one great comic and satirical writer, who is peculiarly an original man, one of our own making, in the person of Butler, the author of *Hudibras*. We know little about his personal history; "all," says Dr. Johnson,

“that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.”¹ This remarkable and beautiful expression of the Doctor’s gives us the essence of what was temporary and conditional and material about Samuel Butler. The essence, however, of the man in the high sense, his genius, we have in his works; and in them we can see, too, his character. He had been secretary to some knight of the Hudibras cast; had held other situations of the sort; had seen a good deal of English life; and was a man of large reading. Considering that he produced the Cavalier Epic, and the one great lasting work of literature which that party have to set up against the *Paradise Lost* of the other side, something ought to have been done for Butler, as the phrase goes. A very clever man, said the Royalists; King Charles reads him. Buckingham admired him. But so the matter ended. Butler died;² and lies buried in the churchyard of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, just by the spot where they put up the hustings, and talk what poor Butler happily cannot hear.³

¹ “In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler,—a man whose name can only perish with the language. The date of his birth is doubtful; the mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.” *Lives of the Poets*.

² He died in 1680.

³ He was buried “in the yard belonging to the church of St. Paul, Covent Garden, at the west end of the said yard, on the north side

Many of the literary men of that day, as well as Butler, were Royalists: Bishop Hall, who lived to a great age, and died in 1656; Cowley, Herrick, and others. Nothing can be more natural than that there should have been Royalist satirists, therefore. The English are a satirical people. Bacon tells us, in a work previously quoted, that on a certain occasion, "swarms and volleys of libels sprang forth, containing bitter invectives against the king; for which five common people suffered death;"—this being the way of reviewing satirical literature in those days! During the Civil War the same weapons of satire were resorted to. Cowley wrote a Satire on the Puritans; Clieveland was immensely popular on the same side; but Butler's work is the only one which can be said to live as a part of our literature.

Butler seems, from *Hudibras*, to have been somewhat of an odd fellow,—a quaint and eccentric man. His reading and illustration are all out of the way; and his manner dry and crabbed at one time, flowing and free and popular at another. I should call him, therefore, a humorist, not only in the literary sense, but in the sense in which we apply the word to one who has some strong peculiarity of character, which he indulges, in whims, in oddities, in under the wall of the said church, and under that wall which parts the yard from the common highway." Dr. Grey's *Hudibras*, 1744.

comic extravagances, according to the bent of his inclination. There is a kind of likeness between Butler and old Burton of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Both men had various and unusual reading; both were at once comic and grave; and both, amidst wild and homely pleasantry, shoot out flashes of thought and fancy which are equal to the efforts of anybody.

I have little doubt that it was the peculiarity of Butler's temperament which prevented his getting on in the world in those days. With his wit and knowledge of the world, he only wanted a little courtier talent to have got the *something* which, according to every body, ought to have been done for him, actually done. Charles the Second's court was not inaccessible to attractive qualities in either sex. All you wanted (besides wit) was tolerable breeding and some audacity. But I can quite see, from what Butler reveals of his character, that he was a shy, strange, and unmanageable sort of a man, who did not "come out" in society.

Among humorous writers he must always occupy a very high place. He is a thinker, old Butler, as you see through all his odd comic poem; while as a man of wit, it would be perhaps impossible to name one in whom wit is so absolutely redundant. In particular, his range of witty illustrations, sayings which join wit and fancy (the wit, as it were, taking

wings of fancy), he is not surpassed, I do not think he is equalled, in the whole range of comic writers with whom I have any acquaintance. You remember—

“For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shone upon.”

No image can be more exquisite than this:—and the variety of them is the most remarkable thing about him. Some brilliant men can only draw from a particular province; but Butler lays not only nature under contribution, but history and the arts, and the follies and fancies of mankind, laws, and customs, and sciences, and the common fashions of life. He is the most figurative of writers. He seems to hold his intellect on the feudal condition of rendering a rose, or a snowball, or some symbolic object, at any moment it may be required.

Hudibras, as a portion of satirical literature, occupies the historical position, nominally, of a satire on the Anti-Royalist party; but its merit consists in the higher fact, of its containing satire on the world's weaknesses generally. The fine sayings which are now quoted (almost as often as Shakespeare's) from its pages tell with equal force against all parties. I decline to concede Butler to the Royalists as their peculiar property. In his *Remains*¹

¹ *Genuine Remains*, edited by Thyer, 1759. These should be

he satirises the vices of Charles the Second's time, the fashions and the wickednesses of that basest of all periods, just as severely as he does the bad aspects of the life of the opposite party. Chance had led him amongst the worst specimens of the various sections who were on the side of the Parliament. But still, whatever our views may be, we must allow every satirist his opinions, and give him full powers of castigation against the knaves and fools of all sides. The Parliamentary party had its ludicrous side undoubtedly; and it will be long before men

read by all who would fully appreciate Butler's powers. The prose works, *Characters* and *Thoughts on various Subjects*, are full of keen sense and wit. In these is found the good joke against a degenerate noble, that, "like a turnip, there is nothing good of him but that which is under ground;" a joke which Hazlitt quotes as his friend Holcroft's, with much applause. I quote a paragraph or two from the *Thoughts*:

"Most men owe their misfortunes rather to their want of dishonesty than of wit."

"This age will serve to make a very pretty farce for the next, if it have any wit at all to make use of it."

In the *Characters* he has this reflection:

"All acts of oblivion have of late times been found to extend rather to loyal and faithful services done, than rebellions and treasons committed. For benefits are like flowers, sweet only and fresh when they are newly gathered, but stink when they grow stale and wither."

How melancholy is the tone here!—I may add, that in his character of the "Riskier," he gives us a good notion of the satire the cavalier ranks were open to—had the wonderful light of his humour been turned on them for the purpose.

forget the pictures of sectarian principles drawn by Hudibras. His epigrams are our watchwords now, when a rancorous and hypocritical bigot attempts to thrust himself between us and the sun, or to poison God's wholesome air with the odour of his sanctity!

The eight-syllable verse of Hudibras is very favourable to comic and laughable satire; and has been admirably used by Swift and Churchill also. The style of Hudibras is very homely and effective, as in the following lines, where he gives us the satirical view of the opening of his century's "troubles:"

“ Did they for this draw down the rabble,
 With zeal and noises formidable,
 And make all cries about the town
 Join throats to cry the bishops down?

 When tinkers called aloud to settle
 Church-discipline for patching kettle;
 The oyster-women locked their fish up,
 And trudged away to cry ‘ No bishop !’
 Botchers left old clothes in the lurch,
 And fell to turn and patch the Church.
 Some cried the Covenant! instead
 Of pudding, pies, and gingerbread;
 And some for brooms, old boots and shoes,
 Bawl’d out to purge the Commons’ House.
 Instead of kitchen-stuff, some cry
 A Gospel-preaching ministry;

And some for old suits, coats, or cloak,
 No surplices, nor service-book.
 A strange harmonious inclination
 Of all degrees to Reformation !”

The queerly-laughing satirist, and good-natured after all !

“ On Butler who can think without just rage,
 The glory and the scandal of the age ?
 Fair were his hopes when first he came to town,
 Met every where with welcome of renown.

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 But what reward for all had he at last,
 After a life in dull expectance past ?
 The wretch, at summing up his misspent days,
 Found nothing left but poverty and praise :
 Of all his gains by verse he could not save
 Enough to purchase flannel and a grave.
 Reduced to want, he in due time fell sick,
 Was fain to die, and be interr'd on tick ;
 And well might bless the fever that was sent
 To rid him hence, and his worse fate prevent.”

So sings one who died three years after Butler, in the thirtieth year of his age, after having achieved the satiric laurel,—one to whose memory Dryden paid a tribute—John Oldham.¹ He has been called

¹ Born 9th August, 1653; died 9th December, 1683. He was the son of a nonconformist minister, and educated at Oxford. He was for some time usher of the free-school at Croydon, and a tutor in private families, but found his way (as all wits do sooner or later)

the "English Juvenal:" but the great name of Juvenal must not be too lightly bestowed. The genuine satiric wrath and satiric wit were in Oldham, undoubtedly,—the impulsive heart, the ready hand, the quick eye; yet he has not left any thing up to the standard at which his promise induced his contemporaries to rate him. But Dryden kindly and gracefully likens him to Marcellus; so let us give to his memory, in thought, the "lilies" and the "purple flowers" with which Marcellus' grave is honoured in Virgil's divine lines.¹

For the memory of John Dryden, the last satirist

to London. He was taken a great deal of notice of, as sour Antony Wood, who had no great love for poets, light-literature men, and the like, testifies. "He became acquainted," says Antony, "with that noted poet for obscenity and blasphemy, John Earl of Rochester, who seemed much delighted in the mad ranting and debauched specimens of poetry of this author, Oldham." William Pierrepont, Earl of Kingston, took Oldham under his kind patronage; and at his seat the young satirist was carried off by the small-pox. For Dryden's lines to his memory,—

"Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own,"—

see Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xi. p. 99. Oldham has imitated both Juvenal and Horace very successfully. *Works and Remains*, seventh edition, 1710.

¹ "Tu Marcellus eris. Manibus date lilia plenis
Purpureos spargam flores, animamque nepotis
His saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani
Munere."

who is to occupy us this evening, I entertain an unaffected regard and a high admiration, neither of which are at all lessened by the attacks made on him of late years. Such attacks on men of the Drydenian rank one must read in the course of one's duties as a *littérateur*; just as the poor weary sentinel at the gate of a fortified town must cry out, "Who goes there?" and be wide-awake to receive the comer, whoever he may be. A general-officer going the rounds comes; the sentry turns out and presents arms. Comes another step: Who goes there?—a poor country clown with a donkey-cart, carrying cabbages: him, too, the sentry must hail, and keep his eye on, and bid him "Pass, friend," with his donkey.

I have satisfied myself that Dryden was a warm-hearted, generous-minded, modest man, who dearly loved literature, worked hard at it, performed incomparable services to it by his fine intellect, and was poorly rewarded in his time; and I leave it to prosperous successors of him to deal with what was weak in his character, and unhappy in his position,¹

¹ Mr. Bell's publication (*Poetical Works of Dryden*, edited by Robert Bell, vol. i. p. 56) of the Exchequer warrant of 6th May, 1684, has altered the complexion of one charge against Dryden. Dryden did *not* become a Roman Catholic in return for a hundred a year from James the Second. This will annoy some men-of-letters; but it is true. Of course, it is still open to lovers of English literature (!) to maintain, that he turned Catholic in order that the

to sneer at his memory, and, elated by a success won by meaner qualities, to thank God they are not as other men are, or even as this poet! My present business with him is in his capacity of satirist; but in that relation we can scarcely appreciate him without glancing at his characteristics generally.

Dryden's nominal rank is that of a poet,—and I am ready enough to acknowledge all his merits; but a more accurate definition of him is that of a man-of-letters. He was a teacher and illustrator of literature of all kinds; a fine prose writer¹ and translator, a dramatist, and didactic-verse essayist. He spent seven years at Cambridge, and was all his life essentially a book-man, though any thing but a pedant. He read during the morning, and wrote; dined with his family at two; and then went to Will's Coffee-house, where he talked about reading and writing, while he smoked his pipe. There is this interest, too, about him,—he was one of the earliest men who made authorship his profession, and faced the world upon that ground: he was a kind of literary gardener, and sold you a violet, or a slip from his laurel-bush, with the most business-like impartiality. He wrote and translated at so additional pension of Charles might be recognised and renewed by James. If a man chooses to think so, who can hinder him?

¹ Those who overrate Addison constantly choose to forget the prose of Dryden and Cowley,—quite as natural, familiar, and easy,—and more powerful.

much a line;¹ and if a volume of translations appeared too small for the money, added a long and charming discourse on the subject by way of preface, and threw that in!² He wrote prologues for a couple of guineas a-piece; and authors and booksellers went to the famous man's shop and bought what they wanted. He took up the tradition of dedications, and got presents for dedicating;—but it was unfortunate for him that the tradition was out-worn, or becoming out-worn, in his time. When your great men are no longer fit to be your patrons, when money has become the patron, and the sentiment of loyalty and kindness has vanished from the relation between merit and the great, then don't dedicate to the "great!" Dryden, however, did not feel the sad propriety of this yet; and it was natural for him to dedicate: he over-did it, I admit, in the mere profusion of elegant language which flowed from him naturally whenever he took pen in hand; but he was no more debased by it than a

¹ "He usually received fifty guineas for about fifteen hundred lines," says Malone;—far smaller pay than is now-a-days got by libelling him!

² "Read all the prefaces of Dryden,
For these our critics much confide in,
Though merely writ at first for filling,
To raise the volume's price a shilling."

So sings "Cousin Swift:" but Malone has shown that he was wrong. The truth is, Dryden loved writing, and wrote from his heart.

portrait-painter is debased because he flatters a likeness.

The cause of all Dryden's embarrassments was, that he took up literature as a profession. He was a man of very good family and connections; and if he had sold himself to making money, the way to do it was surely open enough. Only his instinct made him improve the English language: he would

“join

The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine.”

(POPE.)

And he would follow his intellectual instinct! Of course he had a penalty to pay for his independence and his immortality. Literature was an anomalous profession, without organisation and known *status*. Many a man of meaner talents than Dryden has made a huge fortune by them, and established his family in the peerage. Dryden inevitably had to suffer: he was glad to sell himself to a theatre to write so many plays a year; glad to get a small pension, which was irregularly paid; he worked away under disadvantages of many sorts, and was probably never better off all his life than a brother of his, a grocer,¹ whose connection with trade was probably, accord-

¹ Erasmus Dryden, of King Street, Westminster, who late in life succeeded to the family baronetcy.

ing to Scott, a sore point with the titled family into which the poet married.

There was about John Dryden that element of goodness and *bonhomie*, that brotherly quality of kindness, which belongs to certain personages in history, and for the sake of which we shut our ears to what men (who are no better) say about their public mistakes. You love Dryden; you like his warm-hearted zeal for poetry and knowledge. I can at once discern the element in him which made him drop away from his Puritan connections, and join the Stuart cause. He came up to London with his manners tinged with the austerity of a Puritan household,¹ such as we can fancy that of a country gentleman in those homely and serious days. He was a handsome, plain-mannered, shy boy, with these sable leading-strings still perceptible in his walk. But Puritanism is one way of looking at nature,—and when sincere, of course, a right worshipful one; and the artistic and literary view of life is a different one! A man of wit and social sympathies, a lover of the beautiful, and a humorist, could not be expected to remain a Puritan. There are sacred

¹ "Clad in one uniform cloathing of Norwich druggert," according to an old gentleman who wrote a sketch of him in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1745, and who professed to remember him well. Dryden was always a "homely" man; which is probably what Pope meant when he said he was not "genteel."

birds, and singing birds; trees that utter oracles, and trees that produce blossoms and fruit for summer afternoons. Young John Dryden followed his bent. At the age of thirty-two we are called on to view him with more solemnity, and compassion too; for he marries the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. Dryden's was a good family; but you must lower your pretensions if you marry a Howard, unless you are a very high man in that line indeed. This, it seems, was an unhappy marriage; the lady being proud and passionate, and, in fact, rather eccentric. She did not appreciate Dryden's intellect; and Dryden could not appreciate hers, for a very satisfactory reason. If we could look into that house in Gerrard Street, Soho (five doors from Newport Street, on the left hand,—I have peered at it with interest many a time), as it existed when John was there, and the back of it looked out on the gardens of Lord Leicester's house, we should see some odd squabbles perhaps. I fancy that the brothers "in trade" did not present themselves there when her ladyship was in one of her moods, and particularly when she was on good terms with her family, and Sir Robert or the Honourable Edward was coming. The critics remark, that Dryden is always severe on matrimony:—a tolerable proof that matrimony had been severe on him!

He was in the full prime of his intellect when he

published his *Absalom and Achitophel* and his *Mac-Flecknoe*;¹ Satires which will always be remembered among the highest specimens of the art. He went to work to satirise with the same bluff heartiness with which he did every thing else. His warm nature made him scorn and lash as it made him love; and his bright wit and fine versification were as ready for an enemy as to praise a friend. He makes no disguise of his relish for satire, and says plainly that you have a right to "attack a particular person when he has become a public nuisance." The ethics of Satire are in an unsatisfactory state; and I fear that if you applied the moral test strictly, and made justice your standard, you would have to strike out a good deal of very fine satire. Who is to be the judge when a man has become a public nuisance? Obviously the satirist himself! But Dryden was sincere. He seized the thong with genuine impulses; and he had been much calumniated, though he was the king of English literature. I sympathise with Dryden. I believe in Satire myself; and think that the literary man should lay about him on proper occasion. But there is a difference between a spontaneous effusion of rage and hate, and a cold and malignant preparation of bitterness. The satire which indignation makes will always be the most

¹ *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared in 1681; *Mac-Flecknoe* in 1682.

sympathised with; and the genial man, like Dryden, the most admired.

Dryden professes to prefer Juvenal to Horace for his own reading;¹ and this I can quite understand. There are the marks of personal heat in old Dryden's Satires, and generally a blending of humour and passion, a qualification of scorn by fun, which show you that it was natural for him to hold that opinion. In him, as in Juvenal and some others, the personality and the savageness are accompanied by traces of the satirist's other private qualities—his wisdom, fancy, homeliness. The rod with which he castigates has the leaves and blossoms still sticking to it. The goodness of his nature shows itself when he is angry, even; consequently you sympathise with him, and do not pity his victims so much. Though Dryden's great successor, Pope, polished and elaborated more, and ever had the file in his thin fingers,—though he is more uniformly finished and cutting, he has not more brilliant strokes than Dryden, nor finer-sounding lines. And besides, though Pope had noble personal characteristics, I cannot bring myself to believe that he was so good-hearted a man as Dryden. The faults with which Dryden's memory is reproached are strictly *weaknesses*, deficiencies of moral energy; all his impulses were good:—he

¹ In the *Essay on Satire*, addressed to Dorset, in which the last-quoted remark also occurs.

was not malignant, nor sly, nor artificial. As a satirist, he will bear honourable comparison with—indeed will appear the superior of Pope, if the motives of their satire be contrasted.

The *Absalom and Achitophel* labours under disadvantages as a political poem, with a particular form of invention; for who will trouble himself much about so mean a political period? But the special delineations of character are admirably good. "Zimri" is familiar, as well as immortal. In the second part, two of Dryden's enemies, Settle and Shadwell, appear, and ludicrously peer out from that tapestry of the satirist's working for the benefit of all succeeding times. Shadwell glories in the scriptural name of Og:

"Og, from a treason-tavern rolling home,
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink,
Goodly and great he sails behind his link:
With all that bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
For every inch that is not fool is rogue.

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With wealth he was not trusted; for heaven knew
What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew:
To what would he on quail and pheasant swell,
That even on tripe and carrion could rebel?

.

A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull,
For writing treason, and for writing dull;

To die for faction is a common evil,
But to be hanged for nonsense is the devil."

In *Mac-Flecknoe*, a mock-heroic poem, in which Dryden makes Shadwell succeed to the throne of Flecknoe, the most abject of bards, he makes Dulness say:—

"Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity;
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense."

Pope was a follower of Dryden's, and formed himself upon him: it was Dryden who gave to that English heroic metre its high popularity; so that down to Byron's time it remained the legitimate and standard measure for a satirist to employ.

In order that we may see what manner of man Dryden was when he was old, and took the royal seat at Will's, and when his snuff-box was the fountain of literary honour, I will read from the well-known passage in which Dean Lockier describes his adventure with him, on the occasion of the Dean's first visit to London:

"I was about seventeen years of age," says he, "when I first came to town,—an odd-looking boy, with short rough hair, and that sort of awkwardness which one always brings out of the country with one. However, in spite of my bashfulness and ap-

pearance, I used now and then to thrust myself into Will's, to have the pleasure of seeing the most celebrated wits of the time, who used to resort thither. The second time I ever was there, Mr. Dryden was talking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. 'If any thing of mine is good,' says he, 'tis my *Mac-Flecknoe*; and I value myself the more on it, as 'tis the first piece of ridicule written in heroics.'—Lockier, hearing this, plucked up his spirits so far as to say, in a voice just loud enough to be heard, that *Mac-Flecknoe* was a very fine poem; but that he had not imagined it to be the first that ever was wrote that way. On this Dryden turned round upon him, as surprised at his interrupting; asked him how long he had been a dealer in poetry, and added with a smile, "But pray, sir, what is it that you did imagine to have been so writ before?"—Lockier instanced the *Lutrin* of Boileau, and a poem of Tassoni's. "True," says Dryden; "I had forgot them."—A little after, as he went out, he spoke to Lockier, and desired him to come and see him; which Lockier, we may be sure, very cheerfully did, and was well acquainted with him as long as he lived.

His kindness in this way is elsewhere spoken of, and might serve as an example to his inferiors! It shows that satirical severity is not inconsistent with a

character even of uncommon kindness. The same fact has, I hope, been evidenced in the cases of the men with whom we have dealt up to the present time; and we shall meet with proofs of it, as we continue our progress from the age of Dryden to our own.

SWIFT, POPE, CHURCHILL.

LECTURE IV.

SWIFT, POPE, CHURCHILL.

JONATHAN SWIFT, the famous Dean of St. Patrick's, has left among his numerous volumes such a mass of Satire, and his whole attitude towards the world was so essentially that of a satirist, that he fairly comes within the province which I have selected to make an excursion in. He is such a huge figure in our literature, and his personal story is so strange, so interesting, and so awful, that generation after generation of men gather round his monument with wonder, and try to understand the meaning of it;—as they gather round a pyramid, and speculate on the moral phenomena which produced it. Compared with Swift's life, the lives of his contemporaries are commonplace, and their characters to be read off at first sight. A pious-minded, semi-conventional essayist, with a fine sheen of humour playing over him,—here is his friend Addison; Pope is not such a very difficult man to understand; and Bolingbroke is still easier:—but Swift is a portentous figure. We

just begin, I think, to comprehend and to judge of him fairly, when we admit that he is altogether the most unfortunate man of genius in the history of England. That history is not without several instances of men of genius who have suffered from misfortune. Mere poverty is only bitter in so far as it cramps a man's abilities, and prevents his achieving what Nature has fitted him to achieve. It is bad enough; and Swift for a while had his share of it. But he had to struggle all his life under far deeper obstructions. He had giant energies, and a wretched field for them; a soul for worship, in an age of unbelief; a heart for love, yet under the ban of a mysterious destiny; and he had to fight his fight under the closest of all restrictions,—the restriction on the very energies of life within him, by disease;—he moved from youth in a cloud of hypochondria. Hercules had the poisoned shirt on him all his life.

Now I am quite aware that all the criticism in the world will not make Swift an every-day favourite; he is an exceptional man—entirely an out-of-the-way person. A building, his fame is (as I have observed elsewhere¹) more like a Tower of Pisa than an ordinary edifice,—far from straight to the eye, according to the established notion of what a tower should be. Well, let us admit the fact; but what then? The tower has another relation besides its

¹ In *Singleton Fontenoy*.

relation to our eye; it has its relation to the centre of gravity and the laws of nature; and our business is with them, and to inquire how it is that it stands so firm, and defies breeze and rain? This is the interesting fact about the Tower of Pisa, and cannot be explained by bill-sticking it, much less by pelting it with mud! What we must try to do, is to find out what is essential in Swift; and how did Swift's fortune act upon that? Let us embark upon that mysterious sea, and try for soundings.

It is not to be wondered at that Swift has had very various treatment from critics.¹ You know he acted in public life with the Tory party; so of course the Whigs assail him. Accordingly, you are probably acquainted with Jeffrey's essay on him,—a sharp, slashing, libellous assault, as if he were in the dock, and somebody had hired a rhetorician to get him hanged. Jeffrey, with his quick Figaro-like tongue,

¹ Were one to judge of Swift by his friendships,—as with Pope, Bolingbroke, Berkeley, Addison, Arbuthnot, Steele, Prior, Gay, &c. &c.,—one would rank him high enough; and indeed his assailants in early days were only the scum of party. The book which supplied materials for much abuse of him was the *Remarks, &c.* of Lord Orrery, published in 1752, seven years after his death. Orrery calls him "his friend Swift," and blackens him slyly throughout.—There is a good story accounting for this poor *dilettante's* spite. He had courted and flattered Swift with much assiduity; and one day, calling when the Dean was out, found a letter of his own on the table unopened, with "*This will keep cold,*" written on it in Swift's hand! This story came from the Rev. Dr. Berkeley, son of the Bishop of Cloyne. See Monck Berkeley's *Inquiry*.

and his dexterous wrist and arm, was fighting and screeching in those days, in the blue-and-yellow livery, against all comers,—Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other men living; and he took it into his head to do with this dead one as Charles II. did with Cromwell and Admiral Blake,—disinter him, and hang his bones. Well, one likes energy even in a hangman; and I am not going to say of Jeffrey's Essay that it is not a very capital specimen of its kind. Only, you observe, all understanding of the man is impossible on the system there adopted. There is no attempt in Jeffrey's Essay to explain Swift as a problem; it is a brilliant saying and enforcing of every thing about Swift that could possibly look bad in a conventional point of view. If your mind is made up on the anti-Swift side, here is pleasant reading for you; if you are neither Whig nor Tory, but a simple lover of truth and nature, who wish to know what the phenomenon of Swift's career meant, here is no help for you. In truth, one is sick of the spirit of such essays as this, and the one by the same writer on *Christabel*. It is natural to us to love and believe in great men; and if they look bad and ugly, we wish to see the fact explained, not crowed over and exulted in. These reviewers do not see their own interest: if the great men are such bad fellows, what are we to think of the little ones?

In our own days, however, we have had an examination of Swift's character by a very superior man to Jeffrey. When a humorist deals with a humorist, one may expect appreciation. The creative power (for the breath of genius is the breath of life) brings a man before you in "his habit as he lived." Mr. Thackeray's picture of Swift is human and lifelike; and no man who wishes to know Swift henceforth can dispense with it. But ought we to love Swift more than this portrait makes us? I hope I am properly sensible of the modesty with which it becomes me to give such an opinion. But (and without making my remarks more controversial and polemic than I can help,) I wish to lay before you such a view of this great man's character, career, and position, as shall give you a notion of his person more consonant with the admiration which (whether we love him or not) we must have for his genius.

In the first place, it may be remarked, that Swift was by no means a mere man-of-letters; and this is the great distinction between him and many satirical writers. In fact, he was properly a man of action, and the whole of his writings are eminently practical. He never did and never would have written for writing's sake, nor could have found a vent for his whole nature in that mode of activity. The man-of-letters proper is a quite different nature from his; his cousin Dryden was as different from him as man

could be. The man-of-letters (who is only that) has a peculiar character of his own: he is more a passive man and a thinker than a man of direct energy; he sees and enjoys action as an intellectual object, and can make beautiful pictures of it. But Jonathan Swift was, from the first, a man of the world; he observed mankind, and his studies were all aimed at enabling him to work among them. He gets made Sir William Temple's secretary,¹ and gets a glimpse of the great world, and tries his swan-like wings by watching the flight of that stately and artificial peacock. The first of his works in which his peculiar powers are apparent was written to serve Temple. He expected Temple to give him his chance. When he did get his chance for himself, and became a working power, he wrote away at pamphlets; in

¹ He was twenty-one years of age (in 1688) when he began his connection with Temple; whose wife was a relation of his mother's; whose father had known his family in Ireland; and who engaged him at "20*l.* per annum, and board." In 1693 Swift left him; on which occasion Temple was "extremely angry," as he found him useful. In 1695 he returned, and remained with him till his death, in 1698. "I was at his death," says Swift in 1726, "as far to seek as ever." "Madam," to Temple's sister, in 1709, "I pretend not to have had the least share in Sir W. Temple's confidence above his relatives or his commonest friends;—I have but too good reasons to think otherwise." (Courtenay's *Memoirs of Temple*, vol. ii. p. 244.) Even Sir Walter Scott calls Temple "selfish and cold-hearted." (Scott's *Swift*, vol. xv. p. 260, note.) When Swift, at thirty, applied himself again to the clerical profession, he was duped of an appointment, under circumstances of peculiar infamy.

fact, all his life, his influence was practical. His works of imagination have all the direct object and tendency of spreading opinion and affecting the institutions of the world. He was for and of the world, in its strictest sense; and his struggle through life was—what? To get his proper position and influence there! This was the intellectual side of Swift's life; and we will first look at it.

Now I am not going to argue that the writing a good comedy, or book of satires, or any merely literary feat, ought to be rewarded with a feudal title. I think a man with no other claim a fool if he wants it; I am sure he is a fool if he expects it. But this is quite a different question from the problem: What ought to be done with a thinker and a practical man of genius? Here you have him in Swift, for example. He makes his appearance in the world of honourable parentage; he is well-read, of high powers, and says he to society, "What are you going to do with me?" Well, he gets made a secretary to a superannuated mediocrity; and there goes one sheaf of the first crop of his intellect. What is he to do? How is he to live now that the mediocrity is bound to another region, conducted on different principles? Nothing can be done for him unless he becomes a parson. Let him get that badge, and he may obtain an opening. He pauses,—his nature is essentially

serious and reverent:¹ he knows, and, what is more important, he feels the value of religion.² But two considerations come in,—what kind of hands has the Church I am to join now got into? Is it in this age the sphere for which my powers are best suited? No other field, however, presents itself: so he takes holy orders; and there, for some years, does provincial work in obscurity and narrow circumstances.

Any one who represents Swift's career as guided by a merely selfish wish to get on, does not do justice to all the circumstances;—and how else can we judge of men fairly than by looking at them? A man of his intellect has a right to expect power and position; and he may strive for these without being only selfish. It is the indestructible instinct of his faculty to seek a field for its exercise. It is his struggle for the light and the upper air. I do not find that men who are as ambitious as Swift, on a smaller scale, consider themselves dishonoured by the struggle to get fair recognition in the world. He is down—this first genius of his time—in a country place in Ireland, in the prime of his life, doing duties that some thousands of men are compe-

¹ "At first it may seem a paradox, but it is perfectly true, that the gravest nations have been the wittiest; and in those nations some of the gravest men." LANDOR.

² "Although he has been often accused of irreligion, nothing of that kind appeared in his conversation or behaviour." ORRERY.

tent to do. He pants for air, and play for his great limbs; and leaves this pond, where he can scarcely stretch them, to revel in the sea of the great world. Swift did what Nature had intended him for—what he was best fitted for—(therefore his duty, in a far higher sense than it was his duty to read the collect to clowns)—when he came up to London and joined Harley and Bolingbroke, and was the life and soul of that Tory ministry.

It may be very convenient, but I protest against its being just, to omit all mention of the peculiar social questions which belong to the matter of Swift's position in this country. It is a question of high importance,—why such a man had no better position? Your Harleys, and your St. Johns (not to mention a crew whose names live only in epigrams and in peerages), parcel out every thing amongst themselves. It is like a Saturnalian feast, where the slaves have the good things, and their masters wait upon them. That is the effect of looking at the Queen-Anne period to me. Davus takes the chair; Leno is opposite him; Gulosus is beside them: and at these orgies of power and plunder, who are the waiters? Jonathan Swift advises the direction of the whole; Mat Prior comes tumbling in with the wine; Joseph Addison says grace, and helps the carving, with his sleeves turned up; Mr. Pope sings. A scandalous spectacle, and absurd feast, indeed!

And how shall we understand what makes Swift ferocious and gloomy, if we don't remember the nature of it?

I am really at a loss to know why, if it was honourable for Addison to get himself made Secretary of State, Swift is to be likened to a highwayman for seeking a reward for still greater abilities: and I think it of the first importance to recognise the fact, that his public life is (not to veil the matter) an instance of the monstrous and unnatural injustice of the relation between men of genius and English institutions at that period.

Swift, then,—who, if born in a higher place, might have been any thing; who, if born in the middle ages, would have been a bishop or primate,—came up to London, and exercised an influence during the Harley and Bolingbroke days, which one cannot appreciate without going to the fountains of information. He held probably the most potent position that a writer has ever held in this country; but all the while held it in a dubious and unrecognised way. He was the patron of men-of-letters; got them places, and got them money. He “crammed” the ministers; and his pen was not employed in quizzing hoops or patches, or sneering at City people,—it was an engine of power over all England. He used it as an orator does his tongue,—to *do* something with. In a word, he was a power in the State; and, indeed, it

to make that all clear to my Lord-Treasurer,—whose ears must have tingled when he found himself set right on a point of breeding. But instances are not few. James Bridges, Duke of Chandos, was the Dean's friend, it seems, till he got the dukedom; or, as the Dean has it in the beginning of an epigram—

“James Bridges and the Dean had long been friends,
James is beduked, of course their friendship ends;
And sure the Dean deserved a sharp rebuke,
From knowing James, to boast he knows the Duke!”

Not a dunce nor a fool of quality but thought he had the right, while many tried to exercise it, of playing this kind of trick with Swift. The brusqueness of his manner was assumed, as a kind of protection against insolence and pertness; and, whatever else may be said of it, can be explained without imputation upon his heart. There are several anecdotes of the display of what we may call the Orson-element¹ in the Dean:—as that of Lady Somebody, who declined to sing to him when her husband asked her, —when Swift said, “I suppose you take me for one of your hedge-parsons.” The lady cried. There was a scene. When Swift next visited the house, he said, “Well, madam, are you as proud and ill-natured as you were last time I saw you?” “No,”

¹ “Swift,” said Pope, “has an odd blunt way, that is *mistaken* by strangers for *ili-nature*.” But why should *we* now-a-days so mistake it?

says she, smiling; "I'll sing for you, if you please." This was a good-hearted lady; and you may depend she had better means of knowing the true state of the case, and the precise degree of real offensiveness in Swift's conduct, than we have. The fact is, Swift was a great favourite with women:¹ I don't mean only with your Stellas and Vanessas, but with sensible cultivated ladies, who had not a passion for him, like these famous two, but who liked his society. His deanery was a great haunt of the most estimable ladies in Dublin.² And if you want to know how the great ladies estimated him, you have a specimen of it in the letters to him by the Duchess of Queensberry, who wrote to him as a woman might write to her relation—letters of genuine affection and respect,—at the time when she had Gay in her house; and when Mr. Thackeray would insinuate that Swift was courting her patronage through Gay.³ You best understand what a magnetism of

¹ He had the esteem of such ladies as Lady Betty Germain, Lady Betty Brownlowe, Lady Kerry, and others. "Adieu, my honoured old friend," writes the first of these, in one of the later letters.

² Lord Orrery, with an affectation of epigram as feeble as might be expected, speaks of the "deanery" as being a kind of "seraglio of virtuous women." *Remarks, &c.*

³ See his *English Humorists*, p. 176. The period here spoken of is 1729 and 1730. Swift had long before gained his highest fame. "Pray, do you come to England this year?" writes Gay. "I wish you would; and so does the Duchess of Queensberry. She often wishes she had known you. She sends you her services, &c." Had

force, of intellect, and of character, was about Swift, when you see how people wrote to him;¹ how he beat down all prejudices, and conquered all spitefulness,—which yet, I fear, broke out in sly traits of personal insolence, and rewarded transcendent intellect with a third-rate Church appointment!

The common explanation of the smallness of Swift's recognition is, that he was destined to be a bishop, but that the piety of that period could not bear the notion of giving a bishopric to the author of the *Tale of a Tub*. Odious and sickening cant! The ostensible reason

Swift wished to "warm himself in her radiance," he had nothing to do but accept her many invitations to Amesbury; which he never did, however. After Gay's death, the duchess wrote to Swift, saying, "I wish to be your friend; I wish you to be mine." Her share of the correspondence proves her to have had an excellent head and heart; but I can find nothing in Swift's to lower his dignity.

¹ I doubt if even Swift's writings give us a fair notion of his powers; and incline to lay more stress on the personal impression made by him. Compare the following: "Sir, that you may enjoy the continuance of all happiness, is my wish; as for futurity, I know your name will be remembered when the names of kings, lords-lieutenants, archbishops, and parliament-politicians, will be forgotten." CARTERET (in 1733).—"Adieu, dear sir; no man living preserves a higher esteem or a more warm and sincere friendship for you than I do." BOLINGBROKE (1734).—"You have overturned and supported ministers; you have set kingdoms in a flame with your pen." BATHURST (1730).—By the by, good Lord Bathurst seems to have understood the humour of Swift's *Modest Proposal*, &c. (for roasting children) perfectly; and in a letter to the Dean (Scott's *Swift*, vol. xvii. pp. 289, 90) says, that Lady Bathurst and he thought of beginning with their youngest boy. It was not a satire on matrimony, but on English government of Ireland.

was the *Tale of a Tub*—the real reason was, that he had satirised a favourite; for this was the age of favourites and back-stairs influence; and Swift had scattered some of his terrible Greek fire over the sycophants of St. James's;—so, according to common practice, the name of religion was brought in to back up malignity; and genius was sacrificed to a revengeful woman, in the name of God. Poor Swift! Nature had intended him for something better than an eighteenth-century bishop, I am glad to say. But I will not countenance any such cant as the pretence that Swift was not a good-enough bishop for *that* age, at all events; that he could not have handled a crosier sufficiently well to keep Trulliber's pigs in order, or to manage the black-coated gentry, who were little better than upper servants to the nobility;¹ a generation forming a happy link between

¹ Oldham speaks of the parson of his time (that is, of the time of Swift's youth), as one —

“Who, though in silken scarf and cassock drest,
Wears but a gayer livery at best;
When dinner calls, the implement must wait
With holy words to consecrate the meat;
But hold it for a favour seldom known,
If he be deign'd the favour to sit down.
The menial thing, perhaps, for a reward,
Is to some slender benefice preferred,
With this proviso bound, that he must wed
My lady's antiquated waiting-maid,
In dressing only skilled, and marmalade.”

A Satyr addressed to a Friend, &c.

the persecutors of John Bunyan and the calumniators of John Wesley!

Take Jonathan Swift, then, all in all,—with his hopes and impulses, with his high views of nature, and history, and duty; take him for good and evil, in his greatness and his littlenesses,—and compare him with the other men of his time:—I will back him as a specimen of manhood, and real honesty, and generosity, and nobility of tendencies, against any of them. And I beg your attention to this, that but for his openness, and his general daring way, we should never have had a chance of hearing these stories of occasional rudenesses, and the like, which, taken in a lump out of his long struggle in a chequered and embarrassed life, look so formidable. Some critics remind me of a story I have read of Lord Chesterfield. His servant being reprehended by him for bringing a dirty plate, replied pertly, that “there was a saying, that every body must eat a peck of dirt in his life.” “Yes,” replied Lord Chesterfield; “but not all at one meal, you dirty dog!” I entreat the Jeffreyan critics to think of this. Don’t let us have all the bad little traits about a man gathered together in a lump, out of years of life and struggle. Not all the dirt at one meal, gentlemen, I beg!

This disappointment of Swift’s,—all traceable to the fact, which I defy any one to gainsay, that in

an age of hollowness and falsity he found his great genius not duly employed in the world,—embittered (together with increasing disease) his last years, and deepened a character, not naturally cheerful or light, into solemn gloom and cloud, out of which broke angry lightning, and where thunder ever rolled. All the great men of that age admired him; the Irish worshipped him; fools and rogues (which is one satisfaction) feared him: he had tender love and worship of a higher character, too, for some time; but he sickened, and grew more and more silent from year to year.¹ The disease of brain, which had tortured him all his life, became madness; and the great and gloomy man stalked in silence about his rooms. His last Satire was his epitaph; and having expressed in it that “fierce indignation could no longer lacerate his heart,” the time mercifully came when his great heart felt it no longer, and he was laid (near Stella) in the Cathedral of St. Patrick’s.

His “misanthropy,” and the endless “Stella and Vanessa” controversy, are the two features about Swift which have most affected his reputation with posterity. He is the fiercest, and, take him all in

¹ “For some years before his death, he never took leave of a friend in an evening, but he constantly added, ‘Well, God bless you; and I hope I shall never see you again!’” Sheridan’s *Life of Swift*.

all, the greatest of all the satirists:—and as for his scorn for the world, it did not prevent him loving and honouring his friends, from Pope down to Gay; it did not hinder him from being loved by the poor, whose gratitude may be set against whatever ill effect the story of his freaks of rudeness may have upon your opinion. I have not presumed to speak of him without making myself acquainted with these stories, and the other stories about him. I read him first years ago, when I had no possible interest in believing on one side or the other, and long before I ever dreamt that I should lecture upon him; and all I can say is, that an image of his general greatness of mind and character impressed itself upon me: upon which there might be specks, perhaps, the result of disease and misfortune, but not such as to warrant any one in maintaining that Swift was, taken all in all, a bad and unlovable man.

For his misanthropy, his Yahoos, and his Struldbrugs,—those who know what kind of an age that was, will moderate their indignation. The age of Walpole's voters, and Chartres; the age that supplied Hogarth with his Progresses; the age of Lord Mohun and the Mohawks, of Sir Robert Walpole's after-dinner talk, and Sporus Hervey's loftiness of view; the period that put De Foe in the pillory, and saw the massacre of Glencoe, and trained the warrior of

Culloden to stamp his bloody hoofs on the loyalty of Scotland; the time which had a court like George the Second's,—was not so very, very unfit for claiming kindred with the Yahoo. Swift's life extended from the second lustre of Charles the Second's reign nearly to the half of last century; and many a fine fellow cut a great figure during those many years, who had only a superficial superiority (of outward culture and cleanliness) over the Yahoo! Besides, the Yahoo is only intended as a type of the baser section of mankind, and may rank as an embodiment of that, along with the Satyrs of antiquity, and other curious conceptions allowable in art. With all his ferocity and sadness, Swift had a side of deep tenderness; and a vein of most cordial, homely fun, to be seen in the *Journal to Stella*, and in the playful facetiæ which he interchanged with Dr. Sheridan, Richard Brinsley's grandfather. Any body who has an eye for a man will get points of sympathy with the Dean, after all. He had more heart than many a more smooth person, about whom we hear no scandalous outcry. His offences are not against the instinctive feelings of the heart itself, but rather against society; against a body existing with certain codes of mutual flattery and compromise, concealments, and polite hypocrisies, and servilities, and cowardices.

Poor Swift! He was bent on acting greatly and

bravely ; he had a right to expect that room should be made for him in the palaces of the world. No wonder that destructive literature—that Satire—was his forte ! But his spirit has deeply worked in the history of Europe. He helped to form Voltaire ; he helped to form Byron ; he has nourished the souls of generations of men, who have resolved that governments shall not use Swifts as the giant used the dwarf. The most scandalous sight that the world ever sees is, when this operation is parodied, and the dwarf uses the giant !

I am not going to deal with the “Stella and Vanessa” question at any length. The truth is, that in our present state of knowledge, and in the obscurity in which it is involved, we cannot judge of Swift’s conduct to Stella. I say, we cannot judge of it fairly. Swift is more to be pitied than any thing else, it seems to me.¹ His love for Stella,

¹ Though there are many works on the subject of Swift’s life (the leading events of which I necessarily suppose known to my audience), his biography is still in a very obscure and uncertain state. A mystery hangs over his relation to Temple, over that of Stella to Temple, over even the fact of his marriage with Stella, and over the reasons of his living on such a strange footing with Stella. Much depends upon mere suppositions; and when he is attacked, the worst of what is supposed is generally taken for granted. I remark this, to show how cautious we should be in condemning him wholesale; and I hope, at a future period, to give to some of the problems of his life that detailed discussion which is impossible in my present limits.

however, was the pride and joy of her life. She fell in love with Swift during dreary Moor-Park days, when the stately coxcomb and unlearned pedant of that place extended a cold patronage and a jealous kindness to Swift. To attempt to solve the mystery of Swift's subsequent conduct to her, is like trying to see in the dark. Your eyes ache, and your heart is dull. He placed her in Dublin, under the guardianship of a Mrs. Dingley. He wrote to her during his busiest time his charming and affectionate Journal. He lived near her in Dublin; taught her; loved her; patronised her: she had the honour and consideration, to some extent, of his alliance; but though he married her (which, however, some people still deny¹), they did not live together. We have not, in fact, the means of forming an opinion,—only we know that Swift loved her: can we say with equal certainty, that, dubious as their relation was, she was not happier in that lot than any other lot would have made her? If a mysterious destiny compelled him to make her suffer, did not he, too, suffer with her?—With re-

¹ Yet this story has a respectable pedigree. It can be traced in one line to Dr. Sheridan, through Dr. Madden, as we know from Johnson; in another, to Ashe, Bishop of Clogher (who is said to have performed the ceremony), through Bishop Berkeley, from whose widow Monck Berkeley received it. Again, Thomas Sheridan had it from his father, one of Stella's dearest friends. Still, some inquirers doubt it.

gard to Vanessa, she seems to have flung herself at Swift's head, in the teeth of prudence and judgment, when she must have had means of knowing what was the state of things about Stella. She was (I fear) a vain *dilettante* kind of woman, who was dazzled by his reputation first, and had the ambition of being Laura to a Petrarch, or Heloise to an Abelard;—and positions of that sort require deeper feeling and a stronger nature than Vanessas usually possess. Poor woman! She flew like the moth to the lamp,—it is not the lamp's fault. But we are to pity her and love her, if we like; and pity and admire Stella too; only let us keep ourselves in a state of moderation about the poor lonely Dean, whom they would love in spite of his destiny; and go and behave well to our own Stellas and Vanessas, if we are happy enough to get them.

Swift's works, of which the *Tale of a Tub*¹ is perhaps the best, and *Gulliver's Travels* the next, abound in satire. There is an admirable Satire of his, called *Poetry, a Rhapsody*; an excellent one on his own death; his pamphlets and essays are full of satire; so are the *Drapier's Letters*; and there are

¹ The *Tale of a Tub* was published in 1704; *Gulliver's Travels* in 1726. I have thought it right to look into Cyrano Bergerac, whose Moon-Voyage is supposed to have much assisted Brobdingnag. (Bergerac, *Œuvres*, Amsterdam, 1709.) I see no reasons for attaching any importance to that work.

oceans of squibs, libels, and epigrams. He is the greatest of the English satirists, I think, in all ways. Not that he has written any one piece more absolutely severe and polished than Pope, who is our classical satirist, as author of the *Satire* proper;—but his nature altogether was larger than Pope's. He was more largely related to nature than the other was. He had more humour, for example, than Pope, who had it not in him to produce a downright side-shaking bit of rollicking fun. There is more laughter, altogether, about Swift's satire, as there was about the man; for Pope never laughed, though he had a very sweet smile. The Dean, however (gloomy as he was), had a real humorous side; a manly enjoyment of the ludicrous and the low; and could relish mere buffoonery, and even practical jokes. There are capital stories about the Dean. Then he was a deep thinker: he has sayings about human nature which are as good as anybody's; and his satire goes very deep: it is not only bitter satire against individuals, it is philosophical satire, which goes to the root of things. He was a lord of all the weapons in this line,—invective, ridicule, humour; and includes in himself, like the Trojan horse, many different fighting-men. And yet, as I said when I began, it does not at all seem that he was mainly a literary man. He scattered abroad his writings as a tree does leaves; and his writing seems so much talk, that must be talked

in this way. He was deep in all the great questions; and yet could write what would seize the fancy of a child or a clown. He includes Cobbet, Junius, and Rochefoucauld, and more men, in his huge bulk; and after equalling Juvenal in a slanging-match, he might go off and beat Hook in anecdotes. And to think that, after all this, he must go home to suffer like Rousseau! Let us pity Swift; and at least be civil to him.—When Jeffrey published his Essay, a Blackwood writer (most probably Professor Wilson) said, that “if it proved Jeffrey was alive, it proved still more clearly that Swift was dead.” It was just as well for Jeffrey that he was dead! Don’t let us crow too much on the strength of it!

I need not go at any length into Pope’s biography or character. As the sturdiest of his admirers cannot altogether defend his conduct, so the worst of his depreciators cannot deny his genius. His whole nature was small, thin, and fine, rather than large or broad. Like a tongue of flame, however, thin and small as it was, it was high-aspiring. Its tendency was upward. He loved sublime objects; had a feeling for the sublime and high, and specially for the elegant, rather than for the sacred or the beautiful. This, as it was his artistic condition, so it was his moral one. He would do a noble thing on occasion—he always acted nobly in theory;

but when a temptation came to do a shabby thing, a tricky thing, down flickered the fine flame of his nature from the aspiration which was its tendency. He acted in accordance with his high impulse when he wrote nobly and generously; but yet he was capable of a most paltry stratagem to have a pretext for publishing his letters. There was something small in Pope's faults,—something that resembled his physical peculiarities, his puny limbs, and his feeble body. He was quite as capable of anger and cruelty, and the unamiable passions, as his friend the Dean; and, indeed, their correspondence is curious as a moral exhibition. They are magnificent in their recognition of each other; but with regard to mankind generally, they are rather distrustful and bitter. As good friends exchange jam, or turkeys, or oysters, these potentates occasionally sent each other little pots of gall, or preparations of poison, as friendly gifts. In fact, there is much that is very melancholy in their letters; and all Pope's hates, prejudices, jealousies, scorns, are faithfully represented in his works. His best Satires are personal attacks; and unless you are familiar with his personal relation to Addison and Lord Hervey, you cannot duly appreciate and enjoy his *Atticus* and his *Sporus*. We can illustrate this by looking at the *Sporus*, which, to my mind, is the prince of personal satires;¹ that is,

¹ "Language cannot afford more glowing or more forcible terms

of fierce ones; for the *Atticus* is more subtle and more dignified, and is higher art.

“Let Sporus tremble! What, that thing of silk?
 Sporus, that mere white curd of asses’ milk?
 Satire or sense, alas, can Sporus feel?
 Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
 Yet, let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
 This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
 Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
 Yet wit ne’er tastes, and beauty ne’er enjoys:
 So well-bred spauiels civilly delight
 In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
 Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
 As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
 Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
 And as the prompter breathes the puppet squeaks;
 Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
 Half-froth, half-venom, spits himself abroad.”

It concludes:

“Eve’s tempter thus the rabbins have expressed,—
 A cherub’s face, a reptile all the rest;
 Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
 Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.”

This Satire, or libel if you like, has every merit which such a work can have: brilliance, epigram, cutting discernment of weak points, and demoniac

to express the utmost bitterness of contempt. We think we are here reading Milton against Salmasius.” WARTON.

subtlety of misrepresentation. Mark how pregnant it is with personal allusion :

“that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of asses’ milk.”

Hervey was weak in body, and drank asses’ milk for the sake of his health. The “butterfly” makes his personal elegance (which was remarkable) ignoble at a stroke; “painted child of dirt” demolishes the beauty of his rouge; “the ear of Eve” is an allusion to his position in the household of Queen Caroline; and how subtly is the handsomeness of his person (which Lord Chesterfield’s ballad celebrates) made loathsome by the cherub comparison! Hervey had joined Lady Montagu in assailing Pope.¹ Pope replied in prose and in verse;² went to work with the calm and severe elaboration of a poisoner working with a glass-mask on in his laboratory; and flung the mixture in Hervey’s face, and branded it into hideousness for ever!

¹ Hervey had been as bitter as he could be; yet “even in this case,” remarks Warton, “Pope had given the first provocation.”

² In prose, in the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, Nov. 30, 1733, which Johnson calls a specimen of “tedious malignity,” and which indeed is not equal to the incomparable verses in the text. Both *Atticus* and *Sporus* were first sketched in prose. The Letter has several of the touches which are worked up in the Satire. He speaks of Hervey’s face as “so finished, that neither sickness nor passion can deprive it of colour.” His best prose Satire is that marvellous specimen of irony, the Guardian on Phillipps’s Pastorals.

It is this elaborateness and finish, this awful completeness, which makes Pope our classical English Satirist. No controversies, as to his being a "poet" or not, will ever drive him from his place by the side of Horace and Juvenal; from his leading position in the group of those great and fine intellects who have in various ages seized the very spirit of human society, and depicted it in their pages, or corrected its corruptions, by the force of their inspiration from the sources of moral truth. For the sake of the finished excellence which proves him to have been a great man and a great artist, we must make what allowances we can for drawbacks which it is impossible to hide and useless to ignore. His motives, often enough, were ignoble and paltry,—base even,—tainted with egotism and meanness: but that does not spoil the effect which his genius knew how to produce. The clear crystal-bright liquid of the chemist, it looks quite different from the shrubs and the plants, rooted in dirt, whose product it is! If Pope had not indulged in spite and rancour,—had not not only been revengeful, but cherished his revenge and warmed it in his bosom, we should not have had some of his best Satires. Among all satirists, therefore, no man has higher literary pretensions:¹ but it is doubtful whether he is to be ranked among the

¹ "Surely it is no narrow and niggardly encomium to say he is the poet of reason, the first of ethical writers in verse." WARTON.

first of them for his moral position, and the impulse which made him write *Satire*.¹ Like other men, he expressed himself in his books: his feeling for the sublime is plain enough in the conclusion of the *Essay on Man* (the splendid address to Bolingbroke), and in the wind-up of the *Dunciad*, which, however, has rather the qualities of oratory than of poetry. For mere satirical severity, the *Dunciad* is unrivalled in literature; it is the most Popian of Pope's satires. He had much in common with Horace,—moral insight of the same kind,—similar mastery over a subtle gaiety of ridicule (by dint of which likeness he has imitated him so well); but he was bitterer by nature and temper, and makes wounds that do not heal. Horace was a fatter man (if I may be permitted the liberty to mention such a fact); was

¹ "What did Pope mean, sir," asked Boswell, "by saying—

'Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten metropolitans in preaching well?'"

"Why, sir," answered the Doctor, "he hoped it would vex somebody."—Has Swift (it may here be asked) any where been more "misanthropical" than Pope, in those lines, of which one is—

"Nothing is sacred now but villany;"

and in the magnificent prediction of impending barbarism which concludes the *Dunciad*? I may add, that contempt of the world was always expressed more sincerely by Swift than by Pope, in whom it often appears to be affectation. Swift despised the age *en masse* earnestly; Pope was most earnest in his hate and spite against *individuals*.

more happily circumstanced, under the kindly protection of a great emperor, and a great emperor's favourite; lived in a lovely climate; was an easier, more playful, more essentially humorous man, and a more healthy man. Pope could be either ferocious or light; but his ferocity was so deliberate and so sly,—there is such a snaky coldness of self-command about him while he is inflicting hellish torture, that he appears more unamiable than the most violent professors of satiric indignation; so that it is difficult to believe that he was as good-natured as Juvenal, or Dryden, or Swift, or Churchill. Often his malignant ridicule is like the shock of the electric eel; and the reader has not that sympathy with him which a great satirist ought to inspire. But often, also, when he

“Bares the mean heart that lurks beneath a star;”

when he wings with fancy a great and generous thought, and sends it, pointed with satire, home,—he unites, in one triumphant moment, all the qualities of his art, and attains to a kind of prophetic epigram, where perfect insight is embodied in perfect expression. He was indeed an artist; and generations of writers have imitated his subtle flow of rhyme,—as street-organs go on grinding the music of the composers of Italy.

Pope admired objects rather as high and lofty than as objects of sentiment; indeed, altogether,

he was more susceptible of admiration than of love. I could easily illustrate this, by an analysis of the *Epistle of Eloisa*, as well as from his whole works and conduct. It is a fact of corresponding character, that his feeling for proportion and form is deeper than his feeling for beauty. The appreciation of elegance is kindred to wit, and belongs to his order of mind. The illustration of this remark is to be drawn from the *Rape of the Lock*, one of the most charming of compositions; gay, light, and full of grace and point, displaying his wit and fancy in their amiable aspect, and more playful and jocund than humorous in a deep sense.

It does not seem to me that humour is very prominently a quality of Pope's, though his eye for the ridiculous was lynx-like. A man who was never known to laugh can scarcely have been a man of deep humour. But what is more striking is, that he had little sense for the low or the ludicrous aspect of life; this is why the *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis* was a failure. He wasn't homely enough for that kind of fun. Now Swift had all that; had wider sympathies than Pope; had a relish even for buffoonery and low life; and was not squeamish. Shakspeare could relish clowns and clodhoppers, and sprawl with them; but Pope was blunt on that side: he was sensitive, thin-skinned, and it shocked his taste. As I said before, Swift

was a bigger and more universal man, and there is more nature in all his writings than in Pope's.¹ It is my opinion that we overrate the Queen-Anne period altogether; but whether that be true or no, Swift was the most natural man in it, and his writings have more of that quality than those of any of the rest.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to choose my satirists for their relation to history, and their influence on mankind. Roman society had its Horace and Juvenal; mediæval corruption had its Erasmus, its Lindsay, and its Buchanan; Wolsey his Skelton; the absurdities of French taste their Boileau; and some of the bad men of Charles the Second's time their Dryden. Swift and Pope took up the tradition;—what has been their influence?

The influence, of course, can never be estimated in detail; but it can be speculated on. Both of these men influenced Voltaire, to begin with. But just consider the sale and spread of *Gulliver's Travels*, for example. The fifth generation of readers are now beginning with that work, and getting their first delight out of it; that is, they are enjoying the exquisite realism of the story; feeling themselves huge fellows when they read Lilliput, and shrinking

¹ Dr. Johnson remarked, that Swift "rarely hazards a figure:" but there are many most excellent figures in the Dean's writings; and particularly in the *Tale of a Tub*.

into pigmies when Gulliver is lifted up in Brobdignag. As a story, I appeal to every one's recollection, whether the book is not as fascinating as *Crusoe*. Well,—a second stage of interest opens in a few years to the reader. When he again comes to Gulliver he has enjoyment the second, as he becomes an appreciator of the satire. What humour, what scorn, what ridicule, what a glory of invention and wit! There can be little doubt that Gulliver, and even that one line of Pope—

“The right divine of kings to govern wrong,”

helped the House of Hanover to keep down the Jacobites; and had a distinct action on the American and French revolutions.

Charles Churchill's *Temple of Fame* (a building which is out of fashion now, and has been hidden by new temples, new warehouses, and many big edifices of lath-and-plaster) is a half-way house on the great literary road between Pope's temple and Byron's. He “blazed,” as Byron says,

“The comet of a season,”

from 1761 to 1764, in the days of Wilkes and liberty,—of Bute, Sandwich, and George the Third's youth; and having brought Satire into high renown, and flourished his cudgel with triumph for a brief period of dazzling glory, he sunk into the grave at Dover,

in the prime of his manhood, in his thirty-fourth year. His fame declined too, and his poems were neglected; though a famous name never dies altogether, but still hangs up,—looking like the V.R.'s, and other letters, the day after an illumination,—distinguishable to read, though the glory of the light has gone from it. Yet Churchill is every now and then read; he was published among Pickering's *Aldine Poets* in 1844; and there was an essay upon him in the *Edinburgh Review* so late as the beginning of '45.

Churchill's father was a clergyman, who held an Essex living, and the curacy and lectureship of St. John's, Westminster. He was born in that parish in February 1731, and went to Westminster School,¹ where he was a very clever but not too studious fellow, and got a foundation of liberal knowledge.² He

¹ "The figure which he (Cowper) afterwards made in literature showed the benefit which he had derived both from the discipline of Westminster and its indisciplinè; from that play and exercise of the intellect, which, in the little less profitable hours of school-idleness, he enjoyed with those schoolfellows who may properly be called his peers,—Lloyd, Churchill, and Colman. Cowper had a higher opinion of Churchill than of any other contemporary writer. Cowper made him, more than any other writer, his model. No intimacy, however, appears to have subsisted between Cowper and Churchill, notwithstanding these points of sympathy, and their acquaintance at school, though they were of the same standing there." SOUTHEY.

² "Young Charles received his grammatical education in Westminster School, in which he soon distinguished himself so far, as to

was a fine strong youth, prefiguring the fine burly man he turned out; but also, alas! giving that kind of promise whose performance is somewhat shocking and startling. For Charles Churchill, while yet a boy (and you can fancy what kind of boy, by imagining a Tom Jones with an infusion of Dryden in him), made an altogether preposterous marriage at the hands of the official of the Fleet Prison. He then retired to the North, it appears. It is also said, though apparently without truth, that he held a curacy in Wales, and that he carried on a cider manufactory;—though, for my part, I doubt whether cider was ever the liquor of main interest to Charles Churchill. His early history is obscure; only it is certain that he went into holy orders, was ordained priest in 1756, and officiated as curate for his father in Rainham, Essex,—the church being the line of business which his relations thought the best provision for him. This is what he says of their choice himself:—

“Bred to the church, and for the gown decreed,
 Ere it was known that I should learn to read;
 Though that was nothing; for my friends (who knew
 What mighty dulness of itself could do)
 Never decreed me for a working priest,
 But hoped I should have been a dean at least.

make his tutors sensible that he was a lad of considerable abilities.”
 KIPPIS (*Biog. Brit.*).

Condemned (like many more and worthier men,
 To whom I pledge the service of my pen),—
 Condemned (whilst proud and pampered sons of lawn,
 Crammed to the throat, in lazy plenty yawn,)
 In pomp of reverend beggary to appear,
 To pray and starve on forty pounds a year.”¹

This is tolerably emphatic. But a parson he became; and on his father's death, in 1758, he succeeded to his father's pulpit in Westminster. Churchill did not find this office satisfactory.² He did not excite scandal; but he was soon in debt; and Mrs. Churchill (says Dr. Kippis), it was “always understood in Westminster,” was of an imprudent turn too. We can fancy what was “always understood in West-

¹ From *The Author*, published in 1763.

² “The emoluments of his situation not amounting to a full hundred pounds a year, in order to improve his finances he undertook to teach young ladies to read and write English with propriety and correctness. Mr. Churchill conducted himself in his new employment with all the decorum becoming his clerical profession. Still, however, his method of living bore no proportion to his income; so that he contracted a variety of debts, which he was totally incapable of paying. From this wretched situation he was relieved by the interposition of Dr. Lloyd, the second master of Westminster School, and father of Robert Lloyd the poet. The doctor undertook to treat with Churchill's creditors; and succeeded in engaging them to consent to a composition of five shillings in the pound. In an instance which fell under the knowledge of the writer of the present article, as an executor and a guardian, Mr. Churchill, when he had obtained money by his publications, voluntarily came and paid the full amount of the original debt.” KIPPIS.

minster" about this couple; about the big burly figure, for which the surplice was no fit garb; and about the wife, whose honeymoon had risen from over the horizon of the Fleet Prison wall. He found the situation untenable after three years; and casting about for some field for the energies of which he must have been conscious, he commenced a close attendance on the theatres; and, in March 1761, when he was thirty years old, brought out that famous theatrical Satire, *The Rosciad*.¹ There was a lull for a little, before the roar of popularity began; and then out it burst. Churchill had found his element at last; green-rooms were in an uproar, and coffee-houses in delight. In a short time it was openly stated, to prevent false reports, who was the author. The author himself was not a retiring and morbid individual. No, no! He was soon separated both from the church² and from his wife; he attired his manly figure in "a blue coat with metal buttons, a gold-laced waistcoat, a gold-laced hat, and ruffles." He strode abroad with a significant cudgel

¹ He put his name to the *second* edition. The first "stole into the world," little advertised, and published on the author's "own account."

² "The parishioners, who had invited him to succeed to his father, were compelled at length to lodge a formal complaint against him for the total dereliction of his professional duties; and he resigned in consequence a cure which he could no longer have been suffered to retain." SOUTHBY.

in his fist, to awe enemies, and, if we may be allowed to parody Addison—

“Pleased the *satiric office* to perform,
Rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm.”

Let us just see what kind of treatment he had bestowed upon the most sensitive and thin-skinned of mankind. Here is a specimen, in the case of Yates:—

“So, Yates! without the least finesse of art,
He gets applause,—I wish he'd get his part:
When hot impatience is in full career,
How vilely ‘hark’ee! hark’ee!’ grates the ear!
.
In characters of low and vulgar mould,
Where nature’s coarsest features we behold;
Where, destitute of every decent grace,
Unmannered jests are blurted in your face;
There Yates, with justice strict attention draws,
Acts truly from himself, and gains applause.
But when, to please himself or charm his wife,
He aims at something in politer life,
When, blindly thwarting nature’s stubborn plan,
He treads the stage by way of gentleman;
The clown, who no one touch of breeding knows,
Looks like Tom Errand dressed in Clincher’s clothes.
Fond of his dress, fond of his person grown,
Laughed at by all, and to himself unknown,
From side to side he struts, he smiles, he prates,
And seems to wonder what’s become of Yates.”

For a man to know (what, of course, reflection would tell him) that every friend he had in the world had such a sketch as this of him by heart, must have been a bitter business. The small actors were mad;¹ Garrick first affected indifference, then grew frightened, and presently became servile.² Indeed,

¹ "The author soon found that he had no occasion to advertise his poem in the public prints: the players spread its fame all over the town; they ran about like so many stricken deer; they strove to extract the arrow from the wound, by communicating the knowledge of it to their friends. The public, so far from being aggrieved, enjoyed the distress of the players. No one man, except Mr. Garrick, escaped his satirical lash." DAVIES, *Memoirs of David Garrick*, vol. i. pp. 314-15.

² Garrick foolishly gave himself airs, as if Churchill's praise were all very pleasant, but no such mighty matter. "Whether he was induced to look cold upon his panegyrist," says Davies, "or had dropped some expressions which were officiously carried to Churchill, I know not; but the poet, in a very short time, printed the *Apology*, in which he treated the profession of acting in a most contemptuous manner. That he aimed at Mr. Garrick in the following lines cannot be doubted:

' Let the vain tyrant sit amidst his guards,
His puny green-room wits and venal bards,
Who meanly tremble at a puppet's frown,
And for a play-house freedom sell their own.'

These sarcastic strokes were not bestowed in vain upon the manager; he felt all the force of them. To insure a reconciliation, he wrote a long letter to Churchill, which comprehended an apology for himself and the players. This epistle he read to a friend, expecting his approbation of it in very ample terms; but here he was disappointed. He was told, that as the satirist had attacked him on very slight or scarce any provocation, it was too much condescen-

when Churchill revenged himself in the "Apology" on the *Critical Review*, of which Smollet was the presiding genius, then the world fairly admitted his potency. He now "made hay" according to the invariable practice; charged half-a-crown—instead of the shilling which he had charged for the *Rosciad*—for his productions; and before long he became a man-about-town, and genius by profession; lived with a set of wits, who talked sarcasm and drank Burgundy; and assumed a hostile position towards the big-wigs of the world generally. He adopted, in those years of triumph and excitement, that kind of moral opinion which has been exemplified in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, by Charles Surface, and partially by Robert Burns,—the doctrine, namely, that if you are a good-hearted fellow and hate humbug, you may set the respectable moralities at defiance. This school, which has had, in every age lately, some brilliant disciples, is rebellious and radical in opinion, high-flown in liberality and the generous qualities, and—does not go home till morning. Its "porch" is the tavern porch, and its "garden" is Vauxhall: and though it has a basis of truth as against an opposite school, it is a very unsatisfactory and

sion in him, &c." *Memoirs*, &c. vol. i. pp. 318-19. Davies adds, in a few pages: "He was frequently entertained by Mr. Garrick at Hampton and at his house in town; but would never accept of any play-house freedom or other favour from him" (p. 326).

unprofitable school, and is only tolerable as a stage towards higher theories of life.¹

Fame, like heat, ripens good and bad things indifferently; and while it brought out, in full efflorescence, Churchill's genius, it also stimulated his dangerous passions. He became a loose-living man; partly, no doubt, through the influence of Wilkes, who was now in the full vigour of his vulgar and showy intellect, and of his plausible but unsound character. This cock-eyed, blasphemous, and wag-gish demagogue, who fostered Churchill's weaknesses, and afterwards neglected his memory,² found good-natured, excitable, hasty Charles Churchill a potent ally. Churchill took up his cause against Hogarth, Warburton, Sandwich, Wedderburn, and other men of note. Wit cost him nothing; versifi-

¹ Southey, in narrating (*Life of Cowper*, c. 4) the most unfortunate event of Churchill's life, remarks, that "his moral sense had not been thoroughly depraved." Compare *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxxxi. pp. 77, 78.

² Churchill's will (3d Nov. 1764) contained the following paragraph: "I desire my dear friend, John Wilkes, Esq., to collect and publish my works with the remarks and explanations he has prepared, and any others he thinks proper to make." The "dear friend" never discharged this duty; and indeed the scraps of notes towards the design, which he left, and which were swept into that strange rag-bag, *Almon's Wilkes Correspondence*, are not such as to make us regret the loss, in a literary point of view. The strange dullard who concocted that work dwells on the likeness of Wilkes to Catullus, and also to Algernon Sidney (vol. iv. p. 217). It may be admitted that he was about as like to one as to the other.

cation he had mastered by the study of his much-loved Dryden; he loved popularity and excitement, and satire for satire's sake. So he lashed away at the Scotch, and at Bishop Warburton and others, with all the zeal with which a warm-hearted man goes about any thing he takes up. A better-hearted man than Churchill never lived; he was an affectionate, enthusiastic, loving soul, and English in his tastes and his prejudices. I am glad to be able to read an extract from one of the few of his letters which exist. This extract, which is from a letter written two years before the Satirist's death, shows that his life was not invariably such a hurly-burly course of dissipation as some worthy people—and a good many canting people—were wont to assert.

“When we meet,” says Churchill, writing to Wilkes, in the July of 1762,¹ “you will be amazed to see how I am altered. Breakfast at nine; two dishes of tea, and one thin slice of bread-and-butter. Dine at three; eat moderately; drink a cooling pint; tumble the bed till four. Tea at six; walk till nine; eat some cooling fruit, and to bed. There is regularity for you!”

From 1761 to 1764 Churchill lived in a blaze of fame, published satire after satire, and was a power generally, partly by instinct, partly by accident, on the anti-side. “I fear,” says he to Wilkes, “that

¹ Tooke's Churchill, vol. i. p. xcvi.

the d——d aristocracy is gaining ground in this country!" What kind of man he would have melted into, we can never know; for death blotted his sun out in its noon. Having crossed the Channel to visit Wilkes, he was seized with fever,—moved over to Dover, determined, they say, to die in England,—and died at Dover, on the 4th November 1764, in his thirty-fourth year. When the news came to his dear friend Lloyd, the son of his old master Lloyd, of Westminster, an intimate chum of Churchill's, who had been faithful to him through good and bad luck, he was at dinner. He rose from the table like one struck with fate, and died a little while afterwards. The world wondered and moralised, and went its road; and one dull, evil-minded individual gathered up his strength for a biographic bray, and achieved the same in a hostile spirit in the *Annual Register*.¹ Nobody now-a-days, that I hear of, meditates lecturing on *him*! When this sort of animal wanders for browsing purposes into a churchyard, it shows sad negligence in the beadle!

Churchill had all the qualities that go to make up a fine satirist,—warm feeling, penetrating sense, bright wit, and fancy. He did not imitate Pope, as almost every body who wrote in the heroic metre did during that century. His master was Dryden;

¹ *Annual Register*, vol. vii., for 1764.

and he often achieved the flowing vigour and manly ease of that famous writer. I will give you two specimens of Churchill's style. The first is from his *Prophecy of Famine*, a Satire in the pastoral form, against Scotland, written to serve the cause of the opponents of Bute.

“Far as the eye could reach no tree was seen,—
 Earth, clad in russet, scorned the lively green ;
 The plague of locusts they secure defy,
 For in three hours a grasshopper must die :
 No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
 But the chameleon, that can feast on air.

.
 No flowers embalmed the air, but one white rose,
 Which on the tenth of June by instinct blows ;
 By instinct blows at morn, and when the shades
 Of drizzly eve prevail, by instinct fades.”

This is Churchill's view of the country : but hear what he says of the people :

“Pent in this barren corner of the isle,
 Where partial fortune never deign'd to smile,

 Unknown amongst the nations of the earth,
 Or only known to raise contempt and mirth ;
 Long free, because the race of Roman braves
 Thought it not worth their while to make us slaves ;

Considered as the refuse of mankind,
 A mass till the last moment left behind,
 Which frugal nature doubted, as it lay,
 Whether to stamp with life, or throw away ;
 Which, formed in haste, was planted in this nook,
 But never entered in Creation's book."

My next extract is in a different metre ; from the
Duellist,—a sketch of Bishop Warburton :

" The first entitled to the place
 Of honour, both by gown and grace,
 Who never let occasion slip
 To take right hand of fellowship ;
 And was so proud, that should he meet
 The twelve apostles in the street,
 He'd turn his nose up at them all,
 And shove his Saviour from the wall.

 Was by his sire a parson made,
 Only to give the boy a trade ;
 But he himself thereto was drawn
 By some faint omens of the lawn ;
 And on the truly Christian plan,
 To make himself a gentleman,—
 A title in which form array'd him,
 Though fate ne'er thought on't when she made him.
 A curate first, he read, and read,
 And laid in, whilst he should have fed
 The souls of his neglected flock,
 Of reading such a mighty stock,

That he o'ercharged the weary brain
 With more than it could well contain,
 More than it was with spirits fraught
 To turn and methodise to thought,
 And which, like ill-digested food,
 To humours turned, and not to blood.
 Brought up to London from the plow
 And pulpit, how to make a bow
 He tried to learn ; he grew polite,
 And was the poet's parasite.
 With wits conversing (and wits then
 Were to be found 'mongst noblemen),
 He caught, or would have caught, the flame,
 And would be nothing, or the same :
 He drank with drunkards, liv'd with sinners,
 Herded with infidels for dinners ;
 With such an emphasis and grace
 Blasphemed, that Potter kept not pace :

 Liv'd with men infamous and vile,
 Truck'd his salvation for a smile ;
 To catch their humour, caught their plan,
 And laugh'd at God to laugh with man ;
 Prais'd them, when living, in each breath,
 And damn'd their mem'ries after death."

Such was Churchill, as man and satirist. Coming
 in that artificial age, his fresh feeling and his fine
 mind made an instantaneous and dazzling success.
 But writing his Satires hastily, and from casual im-

pulses, not always original and genuine, his influence passed away, like the influence of meaner men. Living rebelliously, and dying young, he left a dubious personal name; and one has to step aside from the highways of literature, and with sentiments more generous than those of the crowd, if one wishes to find and do honour to his early and half-forgotten grave.

POLITICAL SATIRE AND SQUIBS.

BURNS.

LECTURE V.

POLITICAL SATIRE AND SQUIBS.—BURNS.

CHURCHILL, though a man of genius, did not add any thing to the development of the satiric art. He falls into the ranks above Oldham, but below Dryden; and does not interfere with the supremacy of Pope, as the king of finished English Satire. He was, however, the greatest master of ridicule and invective among the English satirists between Pope and Byron, as his contemporary Cowper was of that more amiable and more purely ethical Satire, of which, in Pope's days, Young was the representative. Young's Satires have been quite eclipsed by the fame of his *Night Thoughts*; a work the sublimity and dark splendour of which is flecked with the wit and fancy which were essential constituents of his mind. His Satires, entitled the *Universal Passion*, preceded the greatest efforts of Pope: they are grave in tone and purpose, but sparkle with epigram; and are made lively by a peculiar kind of dry shrewdness;—qualities characteristic of their author, who

to piety and melancholy joined something of the courtier and place-hunter. He lived to a great age, dissatisfied with the proportion which his share of worldly preferment bore to that of the fortunate wits and writers of his younger days.

I now proceed to speak of a class of Satires of which this country has been prolific. I quoted, in a previous Lecture, Lord Bacon's statement, that in Henry the Seventh's time, "swarms and volleys of libels sprang forth, for which five of the common people suffered death." Libels, "pasquils," and the like, have abounded in this country in all periods of excitement. "Like straws," as Selden says, "they show how the wind blows." We have collections containing specimens "from the reign of John to that of Edward the Second;" and to this hour, when any political crisis occurs, broadsides are cried about the streets, ridiculing the leading statesmen in homely doggrel. The British are a satirical people. What nation excels us in satire and caricature? To political satire some of our very best writers have contributed. When we have a King Midas, a thousand channels murmur out the secret of the state of his ears. Our statesmen are known to multitudes only by burlesques of their features. Hence I venture to make an excursion in this political province. I must select a notable man, who has distinguished

himself in it, here and there; though, of course, masses of such productions have perished. A "lilli-bullero," catching the quick ear of a young Sterne, has its name handed down and made familiar; but generally these songs and rhymes must have died when the fervour of public feeling cooled, and melted into air, like the notes to which they were sung.

The earliest class of political songs comprises various Latin rhyming ones of the "Mapes" kind, as well as old specimens of the modern languages; for a collection of which we are indebted, in a quarter where I have already paid my acknowledgments, to the Camden Society, and the learned editor, to whom also we owe the satires and caricatures illustrative of the history of England since the accession of the house of Hanover. These old satires are of a very fossilised appearance just now, affecting you as old spear-heads dug up from a moss do. What rusty old nails are these, which once made the blood spurt from the crucified malefactor! With a strong effort only of the imagination, and with a strange sad longing of the heart, do we picture to ourselves the days when this old Latin and English rhyme flowed from the heart, fresh as the wine of its day, as the green trees now sunk into peat! The wars with the Scotch, the hopes and fears of the followers of Simon de Montfort, the ostentatious and wild high-hearted overbearing ways of barons and clergy,—these the

early songs picture for us, and faintly echo the innumerable noises once so stirring and vivid in England. The Church appears, in very early times, to have been the leading subject of satire in Europe; and satire to have been one of the chief forms in which the spirit of liberty embodied itself, from the days in which the lively goliards, fresh from the mss. of Juvenal, quizzed the vicar and his *coqua*, to the days when the epigrams of Voltaire crackled about France, and set its dry old rotten institutions on fire. Indeed, it is the business of the Satirist to represent the heart and natural instincts of mankind; he is essentially of the every-day world, and warm with its life; and thus he co-operates with the poet, the dramatist, and the reformer.

Under the Tudors generally, it was ticklish work libelling great people. Queen Elizabeth would bear the pleasantry of her fool Clod, when the satire was couched in those peculiar disguises which the fool adopted, who (poor functionary!) had almost to stand on his head if he presumed to use it. But we know that punishment awaited breaches of authority in her day. But when the Civil War began, there was a fine harvest for the satirists on both sides. On the Royalist side was one man in particular, John Cleiveland, who achieved great reputation as a poet and satirist, going through some twelve editions; and

who is still worth looking at, as a brilliant curiosity. We can approach these terrible libellers of old days now, as we look at the wasps and deadly insects in a museum, fingering them without the least fear of that sting which set the flesh quivering two hundred years ago. Here lies, for instance, poor John Cleiveland, pinned to his card, with a little memorandum, "Royalist satirist; old specimen; presented by the 17th century." A touch of fancy, however, and we see the purpled and dyed wings flutter, and the active body moving again.

Cleiveland was a clergyman's son in Leicestershire; born in 1613.¹ He was a Cambridge man, and in much repute there for his Latinity;² and they say that he was the first man who drew pen in the royal cause. Many of the wits of the age were on that side,—Cowley, Herrick, Butler, among the most famous. We are not going now into the right or wrong of the cause of either of the great parties; but we can easily see how that royal side was a very natural

¹ There is a memoir of him, by Bishop Percy, in Kippis's *Biographia Britannica*. Percy's grandmother was the youngest of four daughters of Cleiveland's brother.

² "He was," says Fuller, "a general artist, pure Latinist, exquisite orator, and (which was his masterpiece) eminent poet. His epithets were pregnant with metaphors, carrying in them a difficult plainness,—difficult at the hearing, plain at the considering thereof. His lofty fancy may seem to stride from the top of one mountain to the top of another, so making to itself a constant level and champion of continued elevations." FULLER'S *Worthies*.

one for the gay, brilliant, and light men of the time to take. A brilliant fellow like Cleiveland arising in those days, with a taste for wit and wine, with a quick sense of the ridiculous, and a natural love of the elegant, was born a Royalist, irrespective of all controversies. What a Puritan really meant, he did not know; it was a condition of feeling remote from his spiritual perceptions. But his eye told him a distinct enough story about the external phenomena. The Puritan was a grim, severe man; his appearance was eccentric; there was nothing genial or jovial about him. He used Scripture phrases and grave expressions, and was hostile to the flagon. He had no chance with Cleiveland, as you see at once by a glance at Cleiveland's portrait. So, at that time, the two parties deepened each other's peculiarities by their opposition.¹ The sterner the Puritan became, the louder was Cleiveland's catch, and the deeper his draught.² Besides, men of his class are impression-

¹ "Every stage, and every table, and every puppet-play, belched forth profane scoffs upon them (*i. e.* the Puritans); the drunkards made them their songs; and all fiddlers and mimics learned to abuse them, as finding it the most gameful way of fooling." LUCY HUTCHINSON.

² "Some men also there were of liberal education, who being either careless or ignorant of those disputes bandied about by the clergy of both sides, aspired to nothing but an easy enjoyment of life amidst the jovial entertainment and social intercourse of their companions. All these flocked to the king's standard, where they breathed a freer air, and were exempted from that rigid preciseness

able and warm-hearted; the fancy had something to attach itself to in the old institutions; the feeling for picture was gratified: and, on the other hand, what a field for the satirist was afforded by the peculiarities of the other party! Cleiveland felt that his whole nature was gratified when he kissed Charles's hand, and quizzed Cromwell's nose.

But, besides being a satirist, Cleiveland was, in the language of his day, a poet; and he belonged to that school of "metaphysical poets" (to use Johnson's expression), which comprised Cowley and other distinguished men. They wrote love-poetry with much ambition, in particular; celebrating their mistresses with a profusion of wit, at once so picturesque and so quaint, that it resembled tattooing rather than any more natural style of ornament. The poet of this class was consumed with passion, according to his own account; but in the height of his emotion he exercised the subtlety of a middle-age doctor, and the minuteness of a Dutch painter. He adored his "mistress;" and to prove it to her, he illustrated his passion from the *Talmud*, from the feudal law, from the most complicated operations of science, and from the peculiarities of astrology or of witchcraft. He played innumerable tricks with his art, which resembled the freaks of the mechanics, and melancholy austerity which reigned amongst the Parliamentary party." HUME.

who made wooden birds that would fly. It was a devotion like the zeal of the illuminators, who doated on the beauties of an ms., and threw all their worship and their genius into some exquisite illuminated initial letters. Cleiveland relates how a bee was attracted by the person of his love, and flew to her ; and he says :—

“Live honey all ! The envious elf
 Stung her, 'cause sweeter than himself ;
 Sweetness and she are so allied,
 The bee committed parricide !”

The same ingenuity is exhibited in his poems about Charles. Of his Satires, the chief was one against the Scotch, for their conduct to the king :—

“Nature herself doth Scotchmen beasts confess,
 Making their country such a wilderness,—
 A land that brings in question and suspense
 God's omnipresence, but that Charles came thence,
 But that Montrose and Crawford's loyal band
 Atoned their sin, and christened half their land.

 A land where one may pray with just intent,
 Oh, may they never suffer banishment !
 Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom,
 Not forced him wander, but confined him home.”

When the Newark garrison, in which he held the office of Judge-Advocate, yielded, Cleiveland may have expected martyrdom as a bitter foe : but the

grim commander, David Lesley, only said, "Let the poor knave sell his ballads;" and set him free,—as if you opened the window to let out a wasp!¹ He lived, after his cause was defeated, in chambers in Gray's Inn, dependent on the kindness of the party which admired him; and died in 1658. He was a pungent satirist; saying of Oliver, "he is so perfect a hater of images, that he hath defaced God in his own countenance." His popularity in his day was immense; but not many years after his death, the wind scattered abroad the leaves that formed his crown. He ceased to be reprinted and to be read; and went as completely out of fashion as the love-locks, the Vandyke-beards, and the steeple-hats.

Charles the Second's reign was a good one for the satirists and squib-writers. The *State Poems*² comprise several sharp and stinging satires against the government. Andrew Marvell's³ name, honourable

¹ He was afterwards seized at Norwich, as a man dangerous from his "great abilities," in 1655; but Oliver let him go.

² The extract which follows is taken from "The Second Part of the Collection of Poems on Affairs of State, by A— M—l. and other wits. London, 1689." But we must not be too hasty in attributing to Marvell pieces in such collections, which, with some smart things, contain many dull and many obscene ones.

³ Born 1620, died 1678. Marvell's wit was great; but his poems, too, have fine and delicate touches. In one of his prose pieces occurs this remarkable piece of advice: "You will do well to make use of all that can strengthen and assist you,—the word of God, the society of good men, and the books of the ancients."

for his fidelity to his principles, is famous among wits. You find it put to verses, where the private and public life of the Court is treated with bitter scorn; they remain now, to testify to us that all the glitter of the crown, which, indeed, was at that time like an ancient supper-crown of roses (an emblem of gaiety, whose attraction was connected with the debauchery of to-night and the sickness of to-morrow), did not impose on the best hearts in England. There is a dialogue between the horse at Woolchurch and the horse at Charing Cross. They complain alternately:

“To see *Dei gratiâ* writ on the throne,
And the king's life say, God there is none!

That he should be styled Defender of the Faith,
Who believes not a word that the Word of God saith.

That the duke should turn Papist, and that church defie
For which his own father a martyr did die.

Though he changed his religion, I hope he's so civil,
Not to think his own father is gone to the devil!

To see a white staff make a beggar a lord,
And scarce a wise man at a long council-board, &c.”

There is plenty of this, and of stronger scandal, against the king's most intimate acquaintances. Such rhymes, such sportive effusions, fell like thistle-seed in many various places, and all came to ripe growth

in due time. It was at the close of that century that Fletcher of Saltoun made his famous remark, that "if he might write the ballads, he did not care who made the laws." To write a lampoon in those days, indeed, was one of the necessary accomplishments of a gentleman. Dorset¹ is lauded by Dryden for his little squibs, in language fit for the celebration of a Juvenal. Buckingham and Rochester threw them off frequently for pleasure or from spite. Congreve took up the tradition of polite lampooning, and exquisitely employs his talent for it in the *Doris*, and in other brilliant little pieces, unrivalled in this department but by Moore alone.

In the early part of the eighteenth century,² we see what importance was attached to such effusions; for no less a man than Swift used to issue them forth when occasion required. It is very curious to read these, and see how so great and so serious a man could adapt himself to writing doggrel for the mob. When he had an object to carry in Dublin,

¹ Dorset was kind to men-of-letters, in a singular degree. Prior has written nothing better than his sketch of him in his dedication to his son.

² Blackmore was so indignant at the public taste for squibs, that he published, in 1700, a *Satyr against Satyrs*.

"How happy were the old unpolished times,
As free from wit as other modern crimes!"

he says. He seems to have hated wit,—and he carefully kept his compositions free from it!

he used to load the hawkers with these fruits of his wit, who went chanting rhymes, ending probably with some such chorus as "Down, derry down," by the friend of Pope and Bolingbroke! This was like a king's scattering largess. Within the present generation, I believe, squibs of the Dean's have been taken down from recitation, having been preserved by tradition among the poor. When England had once begun to be governed by the parties, squibbing became an engine of warfare, and was cultivated as an art. The last century was the century of libels *par excellence*. Due diligence would enable one to trace a line of libellous singers, from those who triumphed in William's ill health and Queen Anne's favouritism, down through the era of the amours of the early Georges and the talk of the third George, to the Queen-Caroline trial. Not a turn of events, not a celebrated man, but has had libellous celebration. History treats the persons with gravity and dignity; but go and ask their contemporaries,—ask those who knew something of them personally, what kind of people they were! The eighteenth century, painted by itself, is a marvellous object. When you read what each of the contending parties said of the other, and only suppose them to be speaking with moderate truthfulness, what a notion you form of them! I confess, that when I read their attacks on each other, I feel inclined to come to the conclusion

which I did about a public controversy some years ago. Two literary gentlemen (both Reformers, by the by) assailed each other in print for a considerable time: one accused the other of shabby conduct; he retorted, by calling him "cadaverous." I gathered, from what I read of the dispute, that they were *both* in the right! And this is the result of reading the ferocities of the last century's controversies,—you get disgusted with both sides!

One conclusion you are pretty sure to come to, when you read political satire and squibs,—a sense of disappointment with their literary merit. You hear that a writer made his friends exult, and his enemies writhe; you examine his weapon, and think it marvellously blunt. This is the case with the great mass of party satire; and it is not a sufficient answer, that you are not acquainted with all the circumstances. A satirist should be able to make you know quite enough of his object to enjoy the castigation. Juvenal does; Horace does; Swift and Pope do. The truth is, that in most cases the hate was the element which made the libel successful; it needed that atmosphere for the squib to burn bright in.

The *Beggars' Opera* belongs to the best class of political satire. Though Gay wrote it, it was Swift's suggestion from which it sprang; and Pope's influence is perceptible in it. All that jocosity about

politicians had a deeper intention than it gets credit for.

“ The priest calls the lawyer a cheat,
 The lawyer beknaves the divine ;
 And the statesman, because he’s so great,
 Thinks his trade’s as honest as mine.”

—So sings the scoundrel Peachum.

“ Since laws were made for every degree,
 To curb vice in others as well as in me,
 I wonder we ha’nt better company
 Upon Tyburn tree.
 But gold from law can take out the sting ;
 And if rich men like us were to swing,
 ’Twould thin the land such numbers to string
 Upon Tyburn tree.”

—So sings Macheath, marvellously in the style of Swift. Swift had always deeper objects than Pope in his satire ; but they both were, in their hearts, bitter against English government generally. Government stopped *Polly*, the second part of the *Beggars’ Opera* ; and Gay never got any thing from the Crown but the office of “ Gentleman Usher” to the Princess Louisa, — a high and puissant princess of two years old ! Those who did get places gave a pretty strong *quid pro quo* in most cases. If any body supposes it was literature that was rewarded

in those days, he is mistaken. We owe it to the Revolution indeed that talent got better pay than it had had just before; for parties fight, and must have fighting-men. But writers were rewarded as servants of party, and not as the apostles of letters! What is the *Campaign* of Addison but a poetical pamphlet? While satire of the high kind, like Young's and Churchill's and Dr. Johnson's, appealed to the public, which has alone saved men of genius in later times,—satire of the inferior order found ample employment in party-wars, in squibs and pasquinades and lampoons, and took the consequences—temporary fame, and subsequent neglect. It is a species of literature which illustrates an age: let us therefore look at it a little more in detail.

Thanks to themselves and their successors, we have no want of information about the last century. It is an endless field for the commentator; and a very amusing thing it is to see how he deals with it. Every now and then we have a fresh batch of *Memoirs*, edited by somebody of distinction (of course), and which is to settle all about Frederick the Prince of Wales, son of George the Second, and tell us whether he hated his mother, or his mother him first; whether the said king did meditate flying to Hanover, or not. Little enough is to be learned about Herbert or Cowley; but plenty is to be known of Bubb Doddington. The commentator girds up

his loins for the task, and assumes the editorial pen. The volumes consist of memoirs of some forgotten big-wig, or letters about the family intrigues of some aspiring dunce. The commentator is in his glory, and notes spring up like toadstools. Dozens of forgotten individuals stir from their obscure vaults, and rattle their dry bones before you, by the aid of such annotation as this: "Hon. Henry Plebson: he was the second son of the first Lord Cadd of Mushroom; ob. 1762. Charles De Gomorrah: Chatham made him President of the Rag-Bag Office; married in 17—Augustina, daughter of the 150th Earl of Plunderville; separated 17—; ob. 1770." Human nature shudders over the labour of reading such matter; tires, even of Horace Walpole's sprightliness, finding no end to his spite, his cant, and his affectation; and is indignant at the hundred attempts to rob the grave of its prey in such publications.

There was one squib-writer of the last age, whose amiable labours extended over many years, and who may be read, in part, with more amusement than this section of satirical literature usually affords. I allude to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. He was a Welsh gentleman, member for Monmouthshire; and he took the side of Sir Robert Walpole, which there was some need to do; for Sir Robert was opposed by powerful and notable men,—Pulteney, Bolingbroke, and others. Every man of note almost wrote squibs at

that time, and complained of the factiousness of those who wrote them against himself. Horace Walpole's letters give abundant instances of the violence of party feeling, particularly that against Sir Robert, who, as "Robin," as the "Triumphant Exciseman," and so forth, was libelled and caricatured year after year. His son Horace tells us, that he heard a man say, "D—n him, how well he looks!" Those who opposed Pulteney, again, were quite as unscrupulous. When he was made Earl of Bath, they called his spouse "the Wife of Bath." Know we not, says Sir Charles, how

"Sands, in cause and person queer,
 Jumped from a patriot to a peer,
 No mortal yet knows why;
 How Pulteney truck'd the fairest fame,
 For a right honourable name,
 To call his vixen by!"

Sir Hanbury Williams (Horace Walpole tells us) did Pulteney more harm in three years than Pulteney and his set had done Sir Robert all the time they had been at him. Indeed, he is a gay and genial writer, with a sharp rather than a strong vein of wit; and embodies his sarcasm with such elegance and lightness, that it is like poisoned champagne, and bubbles with beautiful gaiety. Compared with your Swifts and Popes, of course, he is a pelter of *bon-bons*; but of course you are to consider all the

squib-writers that. He was a good-natured, fine-mannered person; had no place-hunting propensities himself; and had a right to *persifler* the jobbers. He wrote with great freedom, as is curiously instanced in a ballad which nearly subjected him to deadly consequences. Isabella Duchess of Manchester, an heiress, whom many fine gentlemen tried for, disappointed her countrymen, and married Hussey (afterwards Lord Beaulieu, as the commentators carefully note), an Irish gentleman. Sir Charles, after stating the many good offers she had had, concludes:

“But careful heaven reserved her grace
 For one of the Milesian race,
 On stronger parts depending:
 Nature, indeed, denies them sense,
 But gives them legs and impudence,
 That beats all understanding.”

Our satirist had the lively vanity of a man of showy parts. He is smart on the dunce, as we may see in his verses in answer to a pamphlet (supposed to be by Pulteney) called *Faction detected*.

“Your sheets I’ve perused,
 Where the Whigs you’ve abused,
 And on Tories have falsely reflected;
 But, my lord, I’m afraid,
 From all that there’s said,
 ’Tis you, and not they, are detected.

* * *

But stay, let me see,
 What best could it be,
 That such a huge book could indite ;
 For of all these you've made,
 If there's one that can read,
 I'm sure there's not one that can write.

It's above poor Sir John ;
 Not by Sands could be done ;
 And Bootle's too stupid and dark ;
 Ord hardly reads well ;
 Jeff never could spell ;
 And you know Harry Vane makes his mark."

As, during the last century, the course adopted by Sands and others was the surest road to a peerage, it is interesting to see what a clever English gentleman, who belonged to that sphere of life thought of these men ; and what he could say of them with admiration and applause.

A wag of that period, who was also a screw, once exclaimed, while he was eating oysters, " What grand things oysters would be, if one could make one's servants live on the shells !" They achieved that in government ; for the parties got the oysters, and the people the shells. When a bevy of the opposite side got in, this is the way Sir Charles welcomed them : " Bat," in the first stanza, is Bathurst :

" Dear Bat, I'm glad you've got a place ;
 And since things thus have changed their case,

You'll give opposing o'er.
 'Tis comfortable to be in,
 And think what a d——d while you've been,
 Like Peter, at the door!

See, who comes next?—I kiss thy hands ;
 But not in flattery, Samuel Sands ;
 For, since you are in power,
 That gives you knowledge, judgment, parts,—
 The courtier's acts, the statesman's arts,—
 Of which you'd none before !

See Harry Vane in pomp appear ;
 And since he's made Vice-Treasurer,
 Grown taller by some inches.
 See Tweeddale follow Carteret's call ;
 See Hanoverian Gower, and all
 The black funereal Finches."

Sir Charles was for some time Envoy to the Elector of Saxony. That he was a sharp, brilliant man, is obvious enough ; but, after all, nothing in his writings is up to the tradition of his fame.

George the Second was so provoked by the libels of the Pulteney set, that he, with his own hand, struck his name out of the list of the Privy Council ; and when that king left this world, the coming generations were quite ready for his successor and his ministers. But he had as much abuse as any one minister, perhaps, has ever had ; but in Junius came a satirist destined to wield a fiercer lash than any man of his time.

Who Junius was, is a question of second-rate importance, though a matter of high curiosity in its way. But his name (if we ever discover it) will add nothing to the finish of his language, or the point of his epigrams. A strong personality is stamped on his writing, so that we think of Junius the figure as familiarly as we do of many an author. His satire is his great characteristic; for he has not contributed any wisdom to the stock of thought, nor is he a better reasoner than many other men, who do not excite so much.

He belongs, then, to our satirical literature, and to this political department of it. He may be called the father of journalism; for what man ever wrote so well, independently and anonymously, and in a newspaper, before him? We had political essayists and pamphleteers; but they wrote for parties, and in special organs, or in special forms. Junius was the first genuine newspaper-man who spoke to the public on that peculiar footing. One great cause of his success was, that writing in a newspaper, he had such information, and wrote so well. The prestige of his name gave a great impulse to newspapers; for all his force had been exerted there, and his anonymity aided the anonymous system; besides which, his example was an immense stimulus to every man who devoted himself to journalism.

If one adopts a theory about the authorship of

these Letters, one is perpetually tempted to be explaining the Letters by that light, which is a misleading plan, and prevents our forming a fair estimate of them by themselves.

The moral impression that they produce upon me is not so strong as the feeling I have of the man's literary power. I believe more in his hate than his patriotism. Without some genuine emotion—sincere emotion—they would never have been so strongly marked as they are; that he hated Grafton, Bedford, and the King, seems clear enough; but also there is a great air of artifice about them, of tragic, dramatic assumption. This is naturally congenial to the mystery, and, I suppose, was assumed along with the determination to be mysterious. The hate, the indignation (and let me add, the very natural indignation often), is at the bottom of his heart; but when it is to be expressed, the writer projects himself into a prepared figure, and speaks from it. He is something of a swaggerer, our friend; and I fear that if you did pull the disguise off him, you would find the figure inside not so imposing as it looks in its cloak. The sarcasm, however, is unique in these Letters; still owing something of its effect to the writer's solemn way, which delivers an epigram as if it were an oracle; but which, after you have got familiar with it, and with whatever is to be learnt about him, appears terribly artificial. Junius has

a sibylline effect for a while upon you ; yet in time you discover that the sibyl is of the eighteenth century, with a share of trick.

Much admiration belongs justly to these elaborate Letters. Knowledge of the world is to my mind the writer's chief characteristic, rather than wisdom or nobleness of view. He knows how to produce effects ; and is a lord of manner, making his bow, and planting his dagger-stroke with extreme tact. Thus, when he would bring himself into the king's presence, he would deliver his sentiments "with dignity, but not without respect." "Without intending an indecent comparison," says he, "I may express my opinion, that the Bible and Junius will be read when the commentaries of the Jesuits are forgotten." Certain ensigns "infest our streets and dishonour our public places." In these cases we see the artfulness of the man, who studies to wound, with the air of a superior being. In serving up slander and scandal, the same dramatic dignity is preserved : he would have you believe that the mud he flings at you fell from heaven. This theatrical side of the Junius character is very curious and peculiar, and makes him cut a figure half-Roman and half-French, and look like the ghost of Brutus uttering quotations from a lampoon. But whether you agree with him and respect him, or not, you find him an entertaining and brilliant writer.

His best things are said when he is in his least stilted mood, and gives loose to his free comic vein : as when he says of one man, " he has brought infamy even on the name of Luttrell, and exceeded his father's most sanguine expectations." His best epigrams are very much in Sheridan's manner ; more like those of Richard Brinsley than of any one I remember at this moment. When he rises to high flights of rhetoric, he preserves his good taste, and successfully hits your sense of the lofty and the exalted. But at no time has he depth of feeling, much warmth of heart, or humour, or tenderness, or generally, the genial qualities of men like Burke or Johnson. He is essentially an opposition writer, and probably enjoyed the lashing of rogues and fools to a degree which made him tolerant of their existence. His form is as perfect almost as Pope's, and both have been much imitated ; but Junius's style, being the expression of a peculiar disposition highly cultivated, cannot be well imitated. His followers have aped the Roman " great manner," as the supernumeraries might manage to ape Cæsar in Shakspeare's play.

Strange as it may seem, poor young Chatterton¹ has imitated him as well as any body ; and that feat

¹ Born 1752, died 1770. All the "Lives" of Chatterton are indifferent enough. The best account of his career is that prefixed to the Cambridge edition of some years since, in two volumes.

must be ranked among the astonishing evidences of natural talent he gave during his brief and wonderful career. He came up from Bristol in his eighteenth year, after having spent his early youth in the most pure and sentimental meditation on the old days,—a blessed haven to retire to, out of an atmosphere of aldermen, blackguard schoolfellows, patronising pewterers, and a lawyer's office! He loved to lie on the grass, and gaze on the old church, and hear in fancy the vesper-bell ringing; or to muse upon old church-processions; or to warm his imagination at the fire of antique heraldic gold and gules. He had shaped to himself, out of the dim past, one ecclesiastic figure, which he loved to endow with the qualities of his own heart and genius; and he saw in "Rowley" embodied all that was good and high-aspiring in himself; embodied too in the old days, where he liked to wander into,—out of the lawyer's office. In an unlucky hour he started up to London; plunged into the vile atmosphere of anti-Bute, anti-king politics; joined in the destructive element, fatal to peace and love, the wretched business of fighting, for which he was too young and too good. He left the side of Rowley (who was his good genius, the embodiment of what was positive in his nature, as opposed to his mere hate of cant and his sense of satire); wrote songs for Vauxhall, satires *à la* Churchill, letters *à la* Junius;

adopted the talk of coffee-houses, and courted the patronage of Lord Mayors; and passed some months in all that feverish element. He grasped with his young hands at the great fast-rolling vessel of London public life; was too weak to hold on; his grasp yielded, and broke; and he sank for ever, and was lost in the waters. His ghost, with a laurel-crown, looks out at us in history, pale and sad.

The parties seem to have alternate triumphs in the libelling department. But our time will not permit us to go into the *Rolliad*, much less into satirical productions which would require deodorising before being submitted for inspection to the human touch. The famous and once highly-popular Peter Pindar demands a slight notice at my hands in the squib-writing department. Wolcot was an original man; a fair representative of the satirical element in his way; but rather a buffoon than a satirist. The Doctor was a Devonshire man, a physician, and afterwards in holy orders; but the bent of his nature was towards jocosity. His favourite subject appears to have been his sovereign, George the Third, whose person, talk, and conduct he has again and again made merry over:—and I will read you an extract, which fairly represents his manner—a kind of broad fun, something like Swift's drolleries, as a wag of the Dean's household might perhaps have

imitated them. The story is one founded on an adventure of his Majesty's when making a journey. The world has undergone alterations since the days when Ulysses made his journey, and had a Homer for his bard! *Our* Ulysses, then, enters an old woman's cottage, and his eye catches some dumpplings; whereupon Peter Pindar loq.

“ In tempting row the naked dumplings lay,
 When lo! the monarch, in his usual way,
 Like lightning speaks,—‘ What’s this? what, what?’
 Then taking up a dumpling in his hand,
 His eyes with admiration did expand;
 And oft did Majesty the dumpling grapple:—
 ‘ ’Tis monstrous, monstrous hard, indeed!’ he cried:
 ‘ What makes it, pray, so hard?’ The dame replied,
 Low curtseying, ‘ Please your Majesty, the apple!’
 ‘ Very astonishing, indeed; strange thing,’
 Turning the dumpling round, rejoined the king.
 ‘ ’Tis most extraordinary, then, all this is,
 It beats Pinetti’s conjuring all to pieces.
 Strange I should never of a dumpling dream;
 But, goody, tell me, tell me, where’s the seam?’
 ‘ Sir, there’s no seam,’ quoth she; ‘ I never knew
 That folks did apple-dumplings sew!’
 ‘ No!’ said the staring monarch, with a grin,
 ‘ Then how the devil got the apples in?’”

According to Peter, this “Solomon of Great Britain” (as he calls him) started when he was informed; and, in his delight, turned his household into a

bakery for some days.—Peter Pindar's poems sold very widely, and carried a kind of revolutionary laughter at the potentates of the world into hundreds of houses. Gifford thought that he would be doing his Tory patrons a service by mauling the radical jester, and published an *Epistle to Peter Pindar*. But Gifford, though he could manage a kind of savage contempt and point, was no match for the Doctor in fun: and Wolcot came down on him with a torrent of ludicrous Billingsgate, in different productions, of which one bore the amiable title of a *Cut at a Cobbler*. Gifford, whose youth was spent in crushing poverty and obscurity, had once been apprenticed to a shoemaker;—the *satirical* for this employment is cobbler; and if a man *will* enter into the satirical world, he must be prepared to defend every thing about him,—his youth, his parents, his poor old grandmother, all that is most open to assault and battery. While the clubs during that century had the persiflage of Sir Hanbury Williams and the *Rolliad*, and other satirical luxuries, Peter Pindar amused the public; and all classes, high and low, enjoyed the pencil of Gillray.

The great world-movements have always an effect on satirical literature. While all France was simmering just before the Revolution, the *Mariage de Figaro* of Beaumarchais, a brilliant comedy, ran night after night in Paris, though it is pregnant with the

most revolutionary sarcasm. "What has he done for his fortune?" asks somebody of a noble. "He took the trouble of being born," is the answer. This kind of wit crackled up and down the world like fire, and everywhere there was dryness and rottenness for it to lay hold of.

In November 1797 appeared the *Anti-Jacobin*, of which the object is expressed in the title. It was to maul all revolutionaries, British and Foreign, all sympathisers, and generally all new literature that looked suspicious. Gifford did the bloody business; Canning and Frere the elegant and cutting satire (as far as the journal ever had either), and the best pleasantry. *New Morality* is the satire which has the highest aims, and was written by Canning and Frere. I will read to you some lines from the attack on Lepaux:

"Lepaux, whom atheists worship, at whose nod
Bow their meek heads the men without a God."

Should Bonaparte's fleet (say the satirists) bring him here in triumph,—

"Rejoiced our clubs shall greet him, and instal
The holy hunchback in thy dome, St. Paul!
While countless votaries, thronging in his train,
Wave their red caps and hymn this jocund strain:
'*Couriers* and *Stars*, sedition's evening host,
Thou *Morning Chronicle* and *Morning Post*,

Whether ye make the rights of man your theme,
 Your country libel, and your God blaspheme,
 Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,
 Still blasphemous or blackguard, praise Lepaux !

.
 Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd, and Lamb and Co.,
 Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux !

.
 Thelwall, and ye that lecture as you go,
 And for your pains get pelted, praise Lepaux !

.
 All creeping creatures, venomous and low,
 Paine, Williams, Godwin, Holcroft, praise Lepaux !”

For men whose object it was to maintain what they considered a high-bred aristocracy and a pure church, this was rather a ferocious, unscrupulous, and unchristian way of going to work ! But from the days of Bolingbroke to those of Theodore Hook, the Tory party has been remarkable for the violence of its satire. The Anti-Jacobin's tone alarmed its own party ; and it was not carried on in this line long : but to this hour people speak of its satires in a tone of admiration, which to me, at all events, appears much too great for its merits. The Whigs triumphed after a while in the pen of Moore ; but the Tories once more got the satirical whip-hand when Hook's *John Bull* appeared. I consider Moore (whose career does not fall within this Lecture) far the most brilliant of all squib-writers. Sir Charles

Hanbury Williams is Hook's equal in gaiety and point, and writes with far more taste and feeling,—more like a gentleman, as people say, which amounts to a good deal. Hook's career, however, demands some further notice, which I shall extend to it in my next and concluding Lecture.

But there was one writer of the last century, one who wrote satire, but who has done higher things,—who has left a name written upon the earth's surface in flowers; one, in all ways, of the greatest men that the literature of Great Britain boasts,—I mean, Robert Burns. Burns wrote satire, as the greatest men do, when that was the natural attitude for him. The great satirists have been thinkers; men of poetic feeling, high aspirations, warm hearts; not merely men who could write severely of people! We don't praise the heavens only because they give us thunder and lightning, though these are noble and beautiful, and purify the atmosphere.

Everybody knows Burns's history; how he was a poor cotter's son, and strove for knowledge and light; and was going to the West Indies, when his little volume attracted a good man's attention, and the good man encouraged him to come to Edinburgh. The story runs glibly off from the tongue of the whole British people: how he came up there and made a sensation, and was lionised, and travelled;

and how they made him a gauger, and set him scouring the country after smuggled brandy; and how he wrote; and how he liked a glass of toddy (here they shake their heads and look serious); and how he died young, and his fame has been increasing ever since. The story is simple, has been told in dozens of dresses, and set to human music of different sorts. When you visit his house, in the picturesque old town of Dumfries, which stands upon the river Nith, as it flows away to the sea (which house is now occupied by the master of the adjacent ragged-school), they give you a book to sign, which is full of the names of pilgrims. They point out his residences there: the house (now occupied by a tailor, who calls himself a “renovator of gentlemen’s apparel,”) where he first established himself, after giving up the farm of Ellisland as a bad job; the aforesaid queer little house, up a rather steep street, where the ragged-school master is established; and, finally, a handsome mausoleum in St. Michael’s churchyard,—much the most pretentious edifice of the three!

Burns wrote satirical verses, ballads, squibs, and epigrams, as he wrote every thing else,—from his heart. He loved, and hated, and prayed, and drank, in obedience to the instincts of a most vivid and genuine nature, and more absolutely than any writer poured out himself. He is as real as a summer

afternoon: and his very faults were as natural as poppies among the corn; and because they glare and are staring in colour, you must not forget how few and how light they are, compared in bulk and weight with the masses of most beautiful and nutritious grain in the crop. He is redolent of every thing he passed through: the old Scotch household piety; the breezy coolness and beauty of nature; the jolly homeliness of Scotch humour; the closer atmosphere of local politics and market-town punch. He represents old Scotland and new Scotland; feudalism and presbyterianism; what was genuine, and what was bad in the life of his age;—and you can study him as a bit of the history of Great Britain. His satire is a piece of himself; and whether he produced nettles or roses, they were both fresh.

It is to be observed of Burns, that he was born loyal; and that may be said of many other men who have yet been found fighting against institutions. John Bunyan tells us, that he at first worshipped Priest and Church; but poor John Bunyan found that they had nothing to satisfy him; and that for a tinker, born with piety and genius, nothing presented itself from orthodoxy to help him but epicurean sarcasm and the county jail. The feudal system (abuse it who may) had stamped upon the Scotch people a respect for family and aristocracy, an affectionate feeling towards their leaders: their Presbyterian re-

ligion had given them a priesthood of their own, and made them the best-educated people in Europe. Burns's youth, notwithstanding his family's poverty, was immensely influenced by the traditions, and by love of them: he adored the old ballads and songs; and what good he could see in the national religion we know from the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. He dedicated his poems to the Caledonian Hunt; and he was even romantically loyal to the nobles whose families had been out for the Stuarts.

But—and ours is an age of “buts”—the first, the indispensable condition of loyalty is, that you must have something to be loyal to! You can't be loyal to village despots and “Holy Willie:” *that* is not loyalty; that is *flunkeyism*, the basest attitude that the human soul can assume. When the Douglas was wounded, says the old ballad—

“Then he called on his little foot-page,
 And said, ‘Run speedilie,
 And fetch my ain dear sister's son,
 Sir Hugh Montgomery.’”

These old champions were worthy of being followed, where they were worthy to lead. But if *our* Sir James is a mere game-preserve; if, instead of “godly Mr. George,” we have hypocritical sottish Mr. George,—our attitude to them is properly the satirical one. Burns had his heart sickened, his quick sense as a humourist shocked, by the absurd idols

set up for worship in his day. Europe was rising against its idols; and Burns achieved his work with the pen. Indeed, every fault of Europe was summed up in the one fact, that Robert Burns was scouring the country far and wide to seize smuggled brandy. Since King James had gone about as a *gaberlunzie* man, Scotland had not seen royalty in such a strange disguise!

I must leave *Holy Willie's Prayer* to any body's private perusal, who wishes to see irony as exquisite as Swift's,—bitter and brilliant ridicule; and the *Address to the unco Guid* also, full of humour and of heart. I think the best Satire he has written, without doubt, to be the *Holy Fair*, which has so much comic painting, besides its cutting wit. Nothing can be better than the sketches of the various preachers.

“Now a' the congregation o'er
 Is silent expectation,
 For —— speels the holy door
 With tidings o' damnation.
 Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
 'Mang sons o' God present him,
 The very sight o' ——'s face
 To's ain het hame had sent him,
 Wi' fright that day.

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice,
 There's peace and rest na langer;
 For a' the real judges rise,
 They canna sit for anger.

— opens out his cauld harangues
 On practice and on morals ;
 And aff the godly pour in thrangs
 To gie the jars an' barrels
 A lift that day !

What signifies his barren shine
 Of moral pow'rs and reason ;
 His English style and gestures fine
 Are a' clean out of season.
 Like Socrates or Antonine,
 Or some auld pagan heathen,
 The moral man he does define,
 But ne'er a word o' faith in,
 That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
 Against sic poison'd nostrum,
 For — frae the water-fit
 Ascends the holy rostrum :
 See, up he's got the word o' God,
 An' meek and mim has viewed it,
 While common sense has ta'en the road,
 An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,
 Fast, fast, that day."

These Satires excited immense rage; and, indeed, his satiric freedom was the real reason that animated people to talk of his misconduct. One must have seen what a Scotch "Tartuffe" is, before one can enjoy his admirable ridicule.

He was a man who took up, heartily, whatever

he took up; and if he was ill-treated, followed up the individual, and castigated him; which was natural, and good and beneficial to the public. Here is a specimen of his epigrams:—

*On hearing that there was Falsehood in the Rev. Dr. B.'s
very looks.*

“ That there is falsehood in his looks,
I must and will deny;
They say their master is a knave,
And sure they do not lie !”

BYRON, MOORE, &c.

PRESENT ASPECT OF SATIRICAL LITERATURE.

LECTURE VI.

BYRON, MOORE, &c.—PRESENT ASPECT OF SATIRICAL LITERATURE.

WHEN Lord Byron first began to write, the classical satirist of the day was William Gifford,¹ our friend who did the butchering-business in the *Anti-Jacobin*. He had published, in 1794 and '95, the *Baviad* and *Mæviad*; and he was now extolled by the party who had taken him up, as the censor of the age. It is pleasant to know that the satirist has generally ranked in this country as an official of some dignity; though there is a constant tendency in officiality to degenerate into beadledom. One learns something of that age, and of the difference between our times and *it*, by observing the Giffordian phenomenon; by reflecting that Gifford was a great authority; was listened to when he mauled Shelley and Keats; and was deferred to respectfully by the author of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*.

The *Baviad* and *Mæviad* succeeded to a degree,

¹ Born 1757, died 1826.

which to me, when I look at them, appears extraordinary. They were levelled at the Della Cruscans; a clique of sentimentalists who twaddled in the rose-pink style in those days, of whom Mrs. Piozzi was the most distinguished. "See," says Gifford,—

"Thrale's grey woman with a satchel roam,
And bring in pomp laborious nothings home."

In the *Mæviad* he attacks Boswell in this style:—

"And Boswell, aping with preposterous pride
Johnson's worst frailties, rolls from side to side;
His heavy head from hour to hour erects,
Affects the fool, and *is* what he affects."¹

This, however, is only a moderate specimen. One Weston he calls:

"Weston! who shrunk from truth's imperious light,
Swells like a filthy toad with secret spite;"

and once adds a note about some individual who actually appears to have liked Weston, and describes him as a "poor driveller, who is stupid enough to be Weston's admirer, and malignant enough to be his friend." Gifford was hearty in his abuse, as in his general energy, and flung his whole soul into Billingsgate with the same zeal which he had displayed when he studied algebra in the shoemaker's shop, working out "my problems with a blunted

¹ But the *point* here is from the pungent Martial.

awl on pieces of leather."¹ Hunt² attacked him; Hazlitt attacked him; but I think the worst treatment he met with was from old Peter Pindar, whom he incautiously assailed in 1800, and from whom he instantly got a *douche* of savage buffoonery, which splashed him from head to foot. Those were energetic fighting-days—days when, if people hated each other, they said so in public. They gave no quarter, and expected none. "Grosvenor's cobbler this fellow is," said boisterous old Peter Pindar. "To do him justice, he writes very well for a cobbler. I had some thoughts of a formal execution of the felon; but on reflection I resolved to hang him in a note." "Ultra-Crepidarius!" shouted Leigh Hunt. Gifford, however, told the whole world that he had been a cobbler, and gloried in the same. The bitterness lasted for years. Leigh Hunt was once pointed out to Gifford in a room, and saw the little bowed keen man scowling at him. "Why slumbers Gifford?" asked the Anti-Jacobin, as if he were a giant. "Why slumbers Gifford?" repeated Byron, in his *English Bards*. Byron himself, however, soon gave a sufficient reason why all men should be disinclined to try the

¹ See his autobiography prefixed to his *Juvenal*; and *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, in *Westminster Review*, Oct. 1852.

² In *Ultra-Crepidarius*, published in 1823, an elegant satire. "Let the young satirist," says he, in his *Autobiography* (vol. ii. p. 85), "take warning, and consider how much self-love he is going to wound by the indulgence of his own."

satiric weapon after *him*. Byron achieved in satire the highest fame of his age; and Gifford subsided into the editorship of the *Quarterly Review*, and died in 1826.

There are (as far as my experience and observation go) three stages of feeling about Byron, through which the youth of this age pass. When we are first turned out loose into the world and its libraries, with a moderate knowledge of *hic, hæc, hoc*, and a still more moderate one of *πας, πασα, παν*, and have to find out what we are to love, and what we are to believe, we are pretty sure to stumble early on the poems of George Gordon, Lord Byron. That event is a revelation, a first-love, a glory and a beauty not to be described. We *adore* Byron in those days; and not because he is a fine writer (for we have shed bitter tears over fine writers long before), but because his is a modern heart, and he reveals modern feeling; and he promises one a key to the secrets of life, and a basis of belief. We leave him after a while; but in all the mental stages we pass through in these restless and inquiring times, we never, perhaps, feel such passionate admiration as we did for Byron. In the second stage, having failed to find permanent satisfaction, we leave him altogether, and are too apt to underrate him: but finally we come round again, look at him more calmly and coolly, admire his great genius, and view

with love and pity his dubious, but beautiful and aspiring career and character. These cannot be understood, unless his age, his position, his adventures, temperament, and all else about him, be duly weighed and allowed for. My present business is with his satirical achievements, as the expression of one phase of his nature, and one attitude of his life.

Byron's historic position is as an actor in the literary revolution, which brought back *heart* into our books. For some while before him, people had forgotten, apparently, that literature had ever been a part of life. Life was one thing, and literature another; and the man who wrote elaborately encased himself in artifice, and glared at you through a helmet, like one of the fire-brigade in full equipment. When he entered into the writing-department, he bid good-bye to his wife and family; put out the household fire; and was no longer a natural human fellow, with loves, and hopes, and prejudices,—but had departed from the genial realms of day, and become a ghost. Mason's *Elfrida*, Home's *Douglas*, the verses of Hayley, are instances of what I mean. If they were going to re-publish a book of Bacon's, they modernised the style, and spoiled it. Percy "apologised" for publishing his beautiful collection of "ballads;" many of the cultivated believed in Ireland's *Vortigern*; and there were twenty readers of Blair to one of Jeremy Taylor. Beattie, again,

was in his day a lion, and libelled the memory of Churchill,—a man in all ways his superior. When the revival began, Byron's first contribution to it was in the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*; and this was so fresh, and lively, and genuine, and so different from the pompous malignity of Gifford, that every body was startled. Here was genuine laughter to be had out of Satire once more; the *Edinburgh Review* clique, whose easy audacity and contemptuousness were elements in their influence, were treated to a taste of their own severity. It is a pleasant circumstance to reflect on, too, that these Edinburgh wags, who wanted to flatter the "Liberals" by lashing a lord, were whipped into respectfulness by a young fellow whose mother was a Gordon, and a descendant of the Stuarts.¹

The English Bards is a pleasant and brilliant, rather than a great, satire. One of the liveliest passages is on Jeffrey's duel with Moore :

“ When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
 And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by,
 O day disastrous ! On her firm-set rock
 Dunedin's Castle felt a secret shock ;

.

¹ The Stuart blood has been fortunate in the female line. Cromwell's mother was of that family ; so was Charles James Fox's ; and Byron derived, directly, from the marriage of a Gordon with a daughter of James the First of Scotland.

Tweed ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued its calm career ;

.
Nay, last, not least, on that eventful morn,
The sixteenth story where himself was born,
His patrimonial garret, fell to ground,
And pale Edina shuddered at the sound :
Strewed were the streets around with milk-white reams,
Flowed all the Canongate with inky streams ;
This of his candour seem'd the sable dew,
That of his valour showed the bloodless hue ;
And all with justice deemed the two combined
The mingled emblems of his mighty mind.
But Caledonia's goddess hovered o'er
The field, and saved him from the wrath of Moore ;
From either pistol snatched the vengeful lead,
And straight restored it to her favourite's head ;
That head with greater than magnetic power,
Caught it, as Danae caught the golden shower,
And though the thickening dross will scarce refine,
Augments the ore, and is itself a mine !”

Byron studied the established satirists much about this time. With all his originality and daring, he was very loyal to orthodox reputations. He was slow to believe in himself also. When he first succeeded in satire, he thought satire his forte; and preferred his *Hints from Horace* to his *Childe Harold*. The triumphant success of it, and of the *Corsair* and *Giaour*, and others of that class, induced him to believe that the dark and the melancholy were his real elements ;

and he doubted of *Beppo*. When *Beppo* set all the world laughing and admiring, Byron saw that he was a great wit and comic painter; and he gave all his nature fair play at last in *Juan*, his greatest work, and, in particular, one of the finest and subtlest satires in literature.

It is characteristic of Byron, that in all he wrote we have a picture of Byron the man. There was a conventional side to Byron, of course; and we have had pleasantry enough about the misanthropy in his books, and the turned-down collar of himself and his disciples, while there has been no want of more serious observation on his "Satanic" characteristics. Mr. Carlyle (whose occasional remarks on him are the most valuable elucidations of his character among English criticisms) has said, that *Don Juan* is his most sincere work. That I believe. But let us duly estimate the sincerity of his others. For instance: the frequent repetition of the *Corsair* type was, perhaps, the result of its being popular (and Byron could not write without recognition from *without*); but, then, its first fore-shadowing in *Harold* was genuine. The melancholy misanthropic ideal, crying "all is vanity," wandering among the world's ruins, and moralising over death,—that was a true expression of the spiritual part of Byron; that was the curse which his age had inflicted upon his sensitive, and passionate, and high-aspiring, and natu-

rally lofty soul! He was not alone in this melancholy. The same influences which affected him in this way, affected Shelley, affected Keats, the tender and the beauty-loving. He speaks of

“ The weariness, the fever, and the fret :

.

Where youth turns pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;

Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Nor new love pine for them, beyond to-morrow.”

Byron came of a family of men-of-action; of a high type of that brilliant and active race, the Norman. They had been renowned even among cavaliers for their daring; and ages before, they had been Crusaders. His grandfather had been distinguished as an admiral. Yet this Norman gentleman, who is also a poet,—in fact, the flower of his race, and sent up by them, to show the world generally what they could do in the way of men, even in these days, when it is too common to talk of them as effete,—where does *he* find himself? Young Byron finds Europe at sixes and sevens; and as for his brother “Cavaliers” and “Crusaders,” they are all busy, dandying and dining at White’s, and supping at the Cocoa Tree, or Watier’s; sparring, perhaps, for exercise in the morning, at Jackson’s; and winding up at a “silver hell.” The more elegant admire, as a hero, Brummell; and, in fact, some look on me, Lord

Byron, with “my books and my poetry,” as a “bore!” For it is on record, that the arch-dandies thought Byron a “bore!”

Such being the state of things, no wonder that there are two aspects of Byron discernible to the eye. There is one Byron, who drinks, and smokes, and intrigues, and shoots with a pistol, and fights, and gets in debt, and talks “Satanic” sarcasm, and is “affected;” and has been known to drink fifteen bottles of soda-water in a night. There is another Byron, whose heart is full of natural piety, and the memory of a first love; who loves to

“ . . . mingle with the universe, and feel

What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal;”

(*Childe Harold.*)

who bewails over the materialism of the world, and treats it with scorn; who is sensitive and tender, and full of kindness to the poor and the unhappy. The first of these apparently diverse apparitions is the temporary and local Byron—the Byron of an unfortunate age; the last is the perennial and eternal Byron, who lives in the memory of the English people. Or, rather, let us say more plainly, that the good predominated in every way in the natural feelings of this man; and that he may be likened, if a homely comparison be permitted, to a beautiful statue which has been painted over by a blockhead in the

style of modern dress. You must wash that off before you can think of the figure in its natural beauty. If one could conceive Byron with the temporary and conditional removed from him, one would have a truly admirable vision.

It is to be remarked, that all the while that he was indulging in the excesses of his age, he never believed in that course of life. He had to drug his heart and conscience, somehow, before he gave himself up to it. He was always open to remorse; and when we talk of his *soda-water*, let us remember that he took *repentance* along with it. There is a strong distinction between the dissipation of a man whose heart is true, and that of our friend the "pig" of the "garden." He doesn't glory in being a pig: on the contrary, he means to leave the "garden" after this one debauch: at all events, he does not make a philosophy of it, and assert that, after all, the "garden" is the only place for a man. Yet even the dissipation of Byron was but a phase: when we remember what he thought, did, read, and wrote, it can only have been a small phase in his life. And we know, from his last actions and his last poem, that he was developing into the high and pure man, of whom what he had written was the prediction. *Don Juan* was the state of transition from Byron the Denier to Byron the Positive, the Doer. In all his first works, from *Childe Harold* to *Manfred* and *Cain*, he was at

war with the world and with himself; and these dark figures, with their various costumes, and their one note, were expressions of that fact. Misanthropy can be no permanent *status* for a man; accordingly, as he got older, and more tranquil and composed, he came to a pause in that career; and in *Juan* we find the results of the pause between the *Corsair*-view of life and the higher stage (the last to which he attained), the ambition to serve mankind practically in the case of struggling Greece,—an enterprise, one object of which was to redeem himself in the opinion of his countrymen. *Juan*, therefore, is the healthiest and most cheerful of his productions; and in spite of certain levities here and there, which I regret as much as any man (and which may serve as a theme to Stiggins in his leisure hour), it is a high and valuable work. Its predominant tone is humorous and satirical; it is full of sharp good sense; and it is, in truth and fact, a work with a good object. It pictures life genially and soundly; excites your love of the beautiful and the lofty; demolishes cant in many a stirring line; and, above all, the utter sense of weariness and disgust it gives you for the mere life of pleasure, and for the false tone of English society, is most beneficial and healthy. I think it disgraceful, the way in which this book is often treated. I do not consider it a dangerous book to any body who is fit to read it. A fool here and there may make the

mistake of supposing that it is intended to stimulate him into being a Cockney-Rochester; but that cannot be helped. The form is humorous, and the adventures romantic; but the result is the thing to be considered. The whole poem, as a picture of life, leaves you with a sense of melancholy and of satiric scorn,—both, however, much more natural and healthy than those excited by his other works. Meanwhile, your best feelings have been awakened by many most tender and most noble strains of writing, which have taken your heart by storm. And for the rest? The rest is pleasantry and gentlemanly buffoonery, and fantastic affectation, where the element of humour and intellect has kept the doubtful matter from being mischievous, as pure water keeps herbs fresh. Let us bear in mind, that the great humourists, free as they may be now and then, are not the corrupting men. If I wanted to corrupt a youth (which God forbid), I would not give him *Juvenal*, or *Tristram Shandy*, or *Don Juan*; the intellectual exhibition would delight him, and check the mischief to his feelings: no, I would hand him a Jesuit textbook of moral questions!

The chief Satire of Byron, then, is to be found in *Don Juan*, and especially in the latter cantos, where he satirises war and courts, and English society; which last part he introduces in the following stanzas:—

“ The portion of this world which I at present
 Have taken to fill up the following sermon,
 Is one of which there’s no description recent ;
 The reason why is easy to determine :
 Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
 There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
 A dull and family likeness through all ages,
 Of no great promise for poetic pages.

With much to excite, there’s nothing to exalt,
 Nothing that speaks to all men and all times ;
 A sort of varnish over every fault,
 A kind of commonplace even in their crimes ;
 Factitious passions ; wit without much salt ;
 A want of that true nature which sublimes
 Whate’er it shows with truth ; a smooth monotony
 Of character, in those, at least, who have got any.

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade,
 They break their ranks, and gladly leave the drill ;
 But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
 And they must be or seem what they were : still
 Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade ;
 But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
 It palls—at least it did so upon me,
 This paradise of pleasure and *ennui*.

When we have made our love, and gained our gaming,
 Drest, voted, shone, and maybe something more ;
 With dandies dined ; heard senators declaiming ;
 Seen beauties brought to market by the score,
 Sad rakes to sadder husband chastely taming,—
 There’s nothing left but to be bored, or bore !”

We owe that word "bore," I believe, to the last century; for in the correspondence in Jesse's *Life of Selwyn* (where you can form a good notion of what English society was) you find it used as if it were new. Byron was born into that kind of life with a poetic heart; and really I think Conrad and Lara were better company than the people there, of whom Thackeray's Major Pendennis is a type. "Lone Caloyer" is not my ideal of manhood; and the *Giaour* and the young gentleman in the *Bride of Abydos*, whose

"Brow no high-crown'd turban bore,
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round his temples, wore,"

no longer are any thing to me but curiosities. We have found out the gazelle; and even Stamboul has been blown on by cockneyism: but really the Corsair and all his crew are human and lively compared with the gentlemen of the regency, with their complaints of being "bored." One would rather be a pirate, or even a decent human "policeman X.," than one of these wax-work sooterkins!

The *Vision of Judgment* is one of Byron's finest satires; but one does not look with pleasure on his wars against the poets of the "Lakes." To begin with,—he had a far higher opinion of them, and was much more influenced by their writings, than is ge-

nerally supposed. Then, his cause and theirs were in many respects the same; as he would have seen in time, for his impressionability was one of his strongest characteristics; and if ever a man was open to influences, it was he. They were bringing back freshness and life into English poetry, as he was,—each according to his gifts and character. Byron's most permanent influence has been in the same direction. But, as he not only represented his heart and aspiration in his writings, but also his prejudices, moods, tempers, and whims, he wrote a good deal that was no fair representation of the whole of him. He wrote as a man-of-the-world, as well as a poet; he had heard the "chimes at midnight," as well as the nightingale. Indeed, it is his universality which most distinguishes him from the poets of his time; he had an eye equally for mountains and for saloons; and besides being a romantic poet, was a handsome, lively, witty, shrewd English gentleman, with a vigorous constitution and sturdy prejudices. He poured out himself in his writings; and was, in fact, in his *Don Juan*, the chief agent in the anti-Byronic reaction, which, after clearing away the school of morose melancholy and Werterian passion, prepared the way for *Pelham* and a new comic impulse on one hand, and for new developments of poetry on the other; with which we have no business here. I remark this, lest Byron should suffer, because he was so outspoken and free. Many

writers pass for purer, because they are so careful in giving to the world only the cream, the essence, some prepared portion of themselves, representing the very highest in them. There are some who keep their wine for sacramental uses, and meet you only on solemn and high occasions; others who are fond of pouring out whatever they have, and communicating their intellect and imagination as carelessly as the objects of common life. After making all deductions, and allowing for all differences, he still remains beautiful, and to be honoured among the great men of his day.

Tom Moore, again, was loved and made much of; but he is a far smaller man. In my opinion, *his* laurel is too big for him. Let us deny no man his merit. Moore's talents and gifts are to be recognised; and there is no difficulty in doing that,—they lie on the top; and "he who runs" may admire. He is a brilliant man; a melodious, ornamental, glittering genius;—a genius like an eastern dancing-girl, with bells at the ancles, and bells at the waist, ringing with lively music, and bright with holiday-colour in the sunshine. All very graceful and pretty, no doubt. But the fancy, rather than the heart, is touched by the spectacle; and sometimes seriously-disposed persons had better keep in-doors when the performance is going to begin.

When Moore tried the standard heroic Satire, he failed. The young Irishman in the *Fudge Family*, who sends off a sheet of "patriotism," sometimes, is a very dull fellow, compared with Miss Biddy Fudge; he is felt to be a vapourer, and as noisy and empty as demagogues generally. On the other hand, how brilliant and pungent are the playful squibs! Moore's "lampoons" are the most delicious and airy things in satire. They are full of lively ridicule and pointed illustration, and must have produced a sort of ludicrous torment, as of thistles in one's bed. He quizzes people; or, to use a vulgar word, he "chaffs" them, rather than lashes them. He never wrote anything so severe as Byron's *Sketch*, or *Windsor Poetics*, or *Irish Avatar*. The best Satire, as I have often said, touches the heart. Moore's amuses you—sends you away tickled and delighted; he wings his Satire with the pleasantest wit. Wit, and that species of fancy which is akin to wit, was Moore's greatest and most striking gift. You see it in his love-songs, and melancholy songs, and in his descriptions, equally. He never wrote a love-song to compare with Shelley's. Nature is not his quality. *Lalla Rookh* is a tissue of brilliant construction,—as fine as glass-blowing; but the heart of the eastern life is not there at all; only the ornament, the gaiety, the exterior of it; what you would see of it in a ballet, in fact. How tawdry is all that beauty compared with

Wordsworth or Keats! I doubt if it ranks above *virtu*.

The character of Moore was consonant to his genius. He was a good-hearted, or rather a *quick*-hearted, and affectionate little man, ready with smiles and tears; easily excited, and easily passing away. Poetry to him was a kind of flower that bloomed handsomely on a dinner-table, or made up elegantly into a bouquet; but, in the first instance, did not divert him from the soup, or still less from what Jenkins would call the "noble host;" and in the last, was felt to be in its element at the Opera. It was undoubtedly genuine feeling that made him "cry" during a song at Lady A.'s, or appear affected with emotion at Lady B.'s; but the elaborate attention to conventional pursuits which marked his relation to that sphere was quite as strong as the emotion he displayed there; nay, the two must have re-acted on each other. When the emotion became "fashionable," fashion must have coloured the emotion.

It seems to have been a kind of minstrel or troubadour position that Moore affected in his poetic capacity. A man of the lower class, who becomes remarkable for success in the great world, sometimes sets forth plausibly that that is the only sphere where his fine taste is duly gratified; that the manners there, like the old music of the spheres, are infinitely more harmonious and pleasing than those of his

barbarian companions, and that his respectable old grandmother (for example) is comparatively coarse! This, however, is a more honourable motive than the wish to make your songs, if you call yourself a poet, sell better, by dint of singing them as a private guest there. This is the modern minstrel position. The *old* minstrel one was infinitely more natural and respectable. He never pretended to be the baron's equal; besides which, he really admired the baron, who was an actual potentate and ruler, and ready to hoist his banner when required. The same remark applies to the fool; and the same disadvantageous comparison to the position of the jester of to-day.

Moore was so much under the influence of his high social relations, that he had his most serious convictions affected by it. He lost his natural good feeling so much as to write off to Byron, cautioning him against associating with Shelley and the Hunts. He is found expressing his surprise at the middle classes producing such great men now-a-days; a kind of remark that might be pardoned if good-naturedly said by a Courtenay, a Montinorency, or a Bourbon; which would be absurd in the mouths of half the peerage; and is preposterous from the lips of Tom Moore.

Occasionally Moore's Satire rises in tone and feeling into a higher region than that of the *Fudge Family* and the *Twopenny-Post Bag*, and pretends

to indignation, without being dull. He has fine and spirited stanzas on the death of Sheridan, which occurred under melancholy-enough circumstances.

“ Yes, grief will have way ; but the fast-falling tear
Shall be mingled with deep execrations on those
Who could bask in that spirit’s meridian career,
And yet leave it thus lonely and dark at its close.

Yes ; it sickens the heart to see bosoms so hollow,
And spirits so mean in the great and high-born,
And to think what a long line of titles can follow
The relics of him who died friendless and lorn.

How proud they can press to the funeral-array
Of him whom they shunned in his sickness and sorrow ;
How bailiffs shall seize his last blanket to-day,
Whose pall shall be held up by nobles to-morrow !

And thou too, whose life, a sick epicure’s dream,
Incoherent and gross, even grosser had passed,
Were it not for the cordial and soul-giving beam
That his friendship and wit o’er thy nothingness cast ;

No ! not for the wealth of the land that supplies thee
With millions to heap upon foppery’s shrine ;
No ! not for the riches of all who despise thee,
Though that would make Europe’s whole opulence mine ;

Would I suffer, what even in the heart that thou hast,
All mean as it is, must have consciously burned,
When the pittance that shame had wrung from thee at last,
And which found all his wants at an end, was returned !”

This is good sharp satire. Generally, Moore is playful; and he has elsewhere been more good-naturedly severe on George the Fourth, to whom, however, he had dedicated his *Anacreon*, and of whose kindness he had been proud. The Regent, it seems, had for his dinner-table certain little golden donkeys, the panniers of which held the salt. These Moore speaks of with much humour, as

“ The little asses,
Which in that rich and classic dome
Appear so perfectly at home !”

The *Fudge Family in Paris* has real comic gaiety; the pictures of old Fudge, a dull servant of the minister, and of his son Bob,

“ A youth of parts,
Who longs to be a small place-holder !”

are admirable. But Bidy Fudge, the daughter, is the most amusing of the *personæ*. She sets off with her hero (who afterwards proves to be a shopman), as she writes,—

“ To see Montmorency, that place which you know
Is so famous for cherries and Jean Jacques Rousseau !”

The colonel (as she believes him) is quite acquainted with all the stories about him :

“ ‘ ’Twas there,’ said he,—not that his words I can state ;
’Twas a gibberish that Cupid alone could translate—

‘But there,’ said he (pointing where, small and remote,
 The dear Hermitage rose), ‘that his *Julie* he wrote
 Upon paper gilt-edged, without blot or erasure,
 Then sanded it over with silver and azure.
 And oh, what will genius and fancy not do,
 Tied the leaves up together with *nonpareille* blue!’
 What a trait of Rousseau! what a crowd of emotions,
 By sand and blue ribbons are conjured up here!
 Alas! that a man of such exquisite notions
 Should send his poor brats to the Foundling, my dear!’

This questionable colonel had been described by
 Bidly, in a previous letter, as

“A fine, sallow, sublime sort of Werter-faced man,
 With moustaches that gave (what we read of so oft)
 The dear Corsair-expression,—half-savage, half-soft;
 As hyænas in love may be fancied to look, or
 A something between Abelard and old Blucher!”

Here Master Tom was running into danger; the
 Corsair joke trenched on the dignity of Byron, who
 blazed up for a minute into classic wrath, and me-
 ditated a Satire on his friend. But the fit passed
 off without that result,—rather, I confess, to my pri-
 vate disappointment. Once Byron said to him, “I
 could bear any thing but being quizzed.” “Oh,”
 says Moore, “nobody could quizz you!” “You
 could, you dog!” Byron answered, shaking his fist
 at him, with a grin. This little passage gives us a
 glimpse at the natures of both men;—Byron’s exqui-

site sensitiveness (for he felt that the form in which he had cast his passionate feeling had a weak side), and Moore's easy worldly character, over which ridicule, and friendliness, and respect for "a lord," played easily in succession.

In passing to our own period, we must not forget just to mention the *Devil's Walk* of Coleridge and Southey; and Coleridge's *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*; and the *Rejected Addresses*,—as contributions to satirical literature. Coleridge and Southey had both fine satirical wit at command when it was needed. The book of the Smiths has some excellent parodies;—the success of which description of comic writing will always depend on the degree in which the man who parodies can really feel the original. There are excellent parodies in the *Dunciad*; and Pope had no lack of feeling for the sublime. Our own day supplies examples which you will all recollect;¹ nevertheless parody takes a secondary rank. Of these two Smiths, James had the most comic talent; and his *Memoirs* afford examples of a genuine comic vein. He had as much wit, I doubt not, as Theodore Hook; but Hook has been talked

¹ For instance, the parodies in *Bon Gaultier's Ballads*, and Punch's *Prize Novellists*,—both capital works. Parody is generally made little of, because, while a first-rate comic writer seldom condescends to it, almost every man of any comic power can do it tolerably.

about twenty times as much. I think that a man of real merit has a better chance of getting public recognition now than ever; but I sturdily maintain that popularity is no sufficient test of it.

Hook's writings and career are very good commentaries on a text of Pascal's, a terrible little *pensée* of that great man's:—"Diseur de bons-mots,—mauvais caractère,"¹ says he. Of course he means the *diseur* who is nothing else, or, at all events, the man who is essentially *that*. Hook took up in his novels, I know, a conventional standard of right and wrong; and rewards the good, and punishes the bad man, after a fashion. But this "moral" has much the effect of a "tag." If a man is a clown, and his main influence on me is to make me laugh, it is to little purpose that he finishes his tumbling by saying, "Fear God, and love your neighbour." My immediate reply is, that *his* business is not with the law and the prophets; and that if he wishes to meddle with the office of preacher, he had better go home and wash the paint off his face, and remain for a while in sackcloth and ashes. Horace leaves you wiser; Juvenal, indignant and aspiring; Swift, angry, but better; Lindsay, amused and in good nature; Burns, tingling with rage, but full of hope; Erasmus, improved and delighted. The great Satirists

¹ *Pensées*, première partie, art. ix. 22.

have all a healthy effect. But your Theodore Hook, —what is the spiritual effect of *his* Satire?

He began his satirical career with the Queen's trial, and with songs and ballads of the squib description (but full of ill-nature,) against Caroline of Brunswick. He made great fun of those who attended her court, representing them as "gemmen from Wapping," and ladies from "Blowbladder Row." This is the kind of pleasantry which fills his novels, and which made his fame. He was the most eminent man of that school, the leading principle of which is, or was, that no good can come out of Bloomsbury; that good wine, and good cookery, and good manners, are confined to certain regions of the West (where the Satirist, of course, is to be found), and to the inhabitants of which, comic narratives of the way fish is served, and wine handed round, in more unfortunate neighbourhoods, are to be perpetually supplied by that functionary. According to this school, nobody in those quarters of the town, of which the degraded Bloomsbury is the representative, has a right to give dinners or balls, or to marry his daughters, or to keep a carriage. I should not quarrel with Hook or any other man for ridiculing the absurd apéry of aristocracy which *does* characterise some of the middle class; and which has even a dangerous effect, by isolating them in sympathy

from the masses from which they spring. This is fair game. But *he* ridiculed far more widely, and with different sentiments; he satirised in a truly vulgar spirit. *He* was not sentimentally loyal to the great; he did not respect them on the true ground on which aristocracies should be respected, *i. e.* for the historic interest which belongs to, at all events, a section of their body;—he admired fine houses, and fine manners, and splendid dinners; and sold himself (for to that it amounted) for the enjoyment of gold plate and white Hermitage, and the “dear Theodore” of condescending and good-natured potentates. They set him down to the piano, even before he had had his dinner sometimes, according to one biographer.¹ This was too bad! He was proud, however, of the equivocal distinction he attained, and was inclined to swagger, I understand, among his equals. The plush had eaten into his very soul. Ultimately he ruined his heart, his circumstances, and (what was a still greater loss) his stomach; and so died. The biographer above mentioned observes, that his funeral was ill attended by his great friends. But we need not wonder at that. A funeral is a well-known “bore;” and, besides, the most brilliant wag cannot be amusing on the occasion of his own interment.

¹ See “Theodore Hook,” reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*. An admirably written essay it is, too.

I need not go at any length into the writings of a man so well known as Hood; but among the satirical works of that beautiful writer, the *Epistle to Ræe* is to be particularised. He takes up cant, looks at it, laughs at it and over it, till you almost pardon its ugliness, for the sake of the burning and brilliant light he throws round it; he shows that ugliness by contrasting it with the wise and beautiful form of his own mind; then drops it, and carries his tender heart where it will be better appreciated. The gentle-minded giant! he rides out, like Sir Galahad,—

“ His strength is as the strength of ten,
Because his heart is pure.”

There was a real spirit of chivalry in Hood. With all his sense of fun and ridicule, and his abundant playfulness, he never loses his exquisite feeling for the beautiful. He carries a lady's glove in his battle-helmet, and fights with the consciousness of tender eyes watching him. And while high-minded and high-aspiring, Hood does not fritter away his nature in ornament or mere gracefulness; but remains a homely, brotherly, unaffected man!

In our own day we have plenty of Satire in our literature. But, for the most part, Satire does not bloom independently as a plant; it enters into the composition of literary productions, and gives a tone

to them. We have not the satiric laurel; but then it flavours puddings and *blanc-mange*, and is to be tasted in various *liqueurs*. We have novelists, and essayists, and journalists, who are satirical; but where is our Satirist?

There is our grand heroic metre—the metre of Dryden and Pope—is it dead? is it used up? A Gifford would not succeed again;—pompous high-flown libelling (something between Juvenal and a fish-woman) would not be tolerated now by literary men or the public. But does that settle the question? Shall we never have a glorious and spirited heroic couplet? Do we hate no more? Have we no fools and rogues in the land?

The general notion is, that the heroic satire is dead. Nay, we are told sometimes, that the day of Satire is past; that literature is disgraced by such fighting; and that we must all be friendly, and peaceable, and respectable. For my own part, I am slow to believe these theorists. The roses which pleased Horace come fresh as ever into life before my window. Is the spirit of Horace less eternal than these transitory roses? The cry is always of death now. Eloquence is dead; and our senate wants it no more, we are told; and we shall have no Burkes and Ciceros,—nothing but argumentative bagmen henceforth. But let the heart and the passions come into play in some noble stir, and we shall see! 'Tis the

same with poetry, and all the arts, and satire: the man and the time come together, and they rise together to the life everlasting. Our prophets represent the mood of the poet in one of the poems in *In Memoriam*:

“I dreamed it would be spring no more,
 That nature’s ancient power was lost;
 The streets were black with smoke and frost;
 They chatter’d trifles at the door.”

It is only a dream, this of theirs. The spirit of Satire is alive, and working now in various forms. I believe that in its peculiar and genuine form of the Satire Proper there is still plenty for it to do. And, as an agency, fighting is highly useful still in this world; indeed, it would be far healthier for all of us, to fight out our beliefs (if needful in the satiric form), rather than to veil malignity under the pretence of decorum, and gratify evil passions in vulgar and secret ways. Our ancestors knew this; they fought the Devil, for instance, and were not so far gone in moderation as to say, that it was as well to live on good terms with him. You can’t live on good terms with him, however he disguises himself; and, in any case, it is more fatal to do that, than to kick him down stairs. When old Luther heard him (as he believed) flinging the fire-irons about to disturb him, he addressed him in an extremely coarse and unpolite manner,—really in an

unrepeatable exclamation. If there are abundant objects of Satire existing in England, why not let us have men, whose gift lies in that way, banded together to desolate them with indignant wit?

I must be content with briefly indicating the writers in whose works the satiric spirit now works. There is Fonblanque, a satiric reasoner; Thackeray, a satiric painter; Dickens, whose satire is embodied in a huge element of comic and grotesque fun, and human enjoyment of life; Landor the classic, who darts beautiful lightning, when not more amiably employed; Disraeli, the bitter and the dignified, who browsed in his youth on Byron and Junius, who affects Apollo when he sneers, and Pegasus when he kicks; Aytoun, whose jolly contempt has a good-fellowish air about it, and whose rod seems odorous of whisky-toddy. Of Jerrold, I may emphatically note, that he has real satiric genius,—spontaneous, picturesque,—with the beauty and the deadliness of nightshade.

Now, you know, it is a delicate matter to be measuring one's contemporaries in this way, particularly if (as somebody is sure to say) you can't reach quite high enough. But if it is difficult to speak of those whom you admire, it is a still more delicate matter to characterise *schools* existing in one's own time, which one cannot characterise favourably.

It has been my constant object to consider Satire

and Satirists as an elevated subject. The nonsense about the blackness and morbidity of the satirist I have treated with contempt. The great Satirists of whom I have spoken, I have shown to be for the most part kindly, and good, and warm-hearted men. The opposite view of the matter is cant. I have seen a ms. of Blake the painter, in which, speaking of somebody's praise of somebody else, he says :

“Christ used the Pharisees in a rougher way.”

In the highest history which this world possesses we find no mawkish philanthropy in the treatment of knaves. The Proverbs of Solomon, likewise, are full of scorn of fools and other hateful personages. Some of the best and greatest men who have ever lived have been satirical,—from Tacitus to Pascal, from Pascal to Dr. Johnson and Thomas Carlyle. The absolutely needful basis is, a heart that can recognise good, an intellect to see evil, a disposition to love and admire; for if we do not see that a man is able to love and reverence, what value shall we put upon his hate and his scorn? The Proteus Satire is beautiful in many of its forms: it is not beautiful when it appears in the form of an ape. Unfortunately, we have lived to see a school of satirists of this description.

The simious satirist is distinguished by a deficiency of natural reverence mainly. His heart is

hard rather; his feelings blunt and dull. He is blind to every thing else but the satirical aspect of things; and if he is brilliant, it is as a cat's back is when rubbed—in the dark! He has generally no sentiment of respect for form, and will spare nothing. He is born suspicious; and if he hears the world admiring any thing, forthwith he concludes that it must be “humbug.” He has no regard to the heaps of honour gathered round this object by time, and the affection of wise men. He cries, “Down with it!” As his kinsman, when looking at some vase, or curious massive specimen of gold, sees only his own image in it, our satirist sees the ridiculous only in every object, and forgets that the more clearly he sees it, the more he testifies to its brightness. Or, as his kinsman breaks a cocoa-nut only to get at the milk, *he* would destroy every thing only to nourish his mean nature. He prides himself on his commonest qualities,—as the negroes who rebelled called themselves Marquises of Lemonade. He would tear the blossoms off a rose-branch to make it a stick to beat his betters with. He employs his gifts in ignoble objects,—as you see in sweetmeat-shops sugar shaped into dogs and pigs. He taints his mind with egotism; as if a man should spoil the sight of a telescope by clouding it with his breath. He overrates the value of his quickness and activity, and forgets that (like his kinsman) he owes his tri-

umphant power of swinging in high places to the fact of his prehensile tail.

Of course, he has no enthusiasm. What he loves in literature is not literature itself. Jacob's-ladder is to him a serviceable thing to carry a hod on. If you profess any other belief, you are a "humbug" to him; and he spatters you with mud to prove that you are naturally dirty. For a good hearty assault on a book he has not read, I will back the simious satirist against the world; or for abuse of the Classics; or for a good hearty misrepresentation of the spirit and intention of the writings of Carlyle. But as a general rule, an ancient writer of our own or any other country is the subject on which his Satire is most lively. Instead of a silver coin of wit and wisdom, he prefers the copper change for it afforded by himself and his contemporaries.

The "joker" is a kinsman of this satirist, and of a branch of the same great family. He, however, is a milder and better fellow; his chief mistake is mistaking the position of wit, which is a light on the road to sense, and not a firework to tickle fools. He expends his whole nature in jokes, and is to the present rich, idle, good-natured public, what the "fool" was to the great old barons of Europe.

When Rodolf de Swigville came home from the chase, and spread his huge limbs under the table, up came "ye foole," and flashed out some jest, which set

our sturdy friend in a "roar." When he was not wanted, or when Rodolf was hearing the tale of *Sir Eli-noure* read to him by Father Anselm, and was composing himself to sleep amidst visions of feudal grandeur, "ye foole" went out in the court-yard, and watched the stately peacock; or played with the pet hound; or dangled at the heels of Lady Marjory, and made half-witted jokes about her good looks; or fell foul of the servants, who were doubtless jealous of him, and deafened them with his noisy laughter. There was many a sincere friendship between the baron and his poor jester, in whom he recognised a stray ray of heaven's light, most curiously coloured. Men had their fools painted with them; lived with them on a kind of familiar footing. The fool became, after years had passed, a kind of part and parcel of the family, and had a drop from their daily cup. Was it that daily life was more serious and earnest than it is now, and that so its recreations were naturally more extraordinary?

The public now is the baron, and has its jester, who comes tumbling up to the side of its good-natured ears with his jibe. He makes merry with it over the day's events, and the changes of governments and fashions, and awakens laughter in its lazy eyes. But this outward sheen of pleasantry, which has nothing to say to the heart, and very little to the intellect, introduces a giggling murmur into the

day's conversation, and peoples our streets and our thoroughfares with a legion of buffoons. All this may be fun (though that is doubtful); but it is not literature! The men-of-letters of England are not responsible for this! It has the same relation to comedy that Trip, in the *School for Scandal*, has to Charles Surface, and is little better than an application to public affairs, in literary form, of the merriment of street-shows and the playfulness of dancing-dogs.

I suppose that most men who address the public aspire to some slight influence on opinion,—the propagation of something, whether humorously urged or not, which is to contribute its drop to the dissemination of truth among mankind! I have shown how the true Satirist contributes his share to that, and how he may hope that *his* laughter will not die away along with the cachinnation of merry-andrews, but will add its modest quota to the wisdom and happiness of mankind.

Such has long been my belief with regard to this subject:—and with many thanks to you for listening to my expositions of it, I now leave them to your kindly consideration.

THE END.

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